

# THE JESSE JAMES STORIES

## A WEEKLY DEALING WITH THE DETECTION OF CRIME

*Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.*

**No. 25.**

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JESSE'S PISTOL SHOT AND QUICK LASSO DROPPED THE WILD STEER IN A HEAP, JUST CLEARING THE GIRL'S CLOTHING.—(CHAPTER XLVII.)



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# Jesse James' Exploits.

By W. B. LAWSON.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### A SCENE IN DEAD MULE.

"Whoop! Hi thar! Look out, boys! Give ther critter ther right o' way an' be quick erbout it!"

"Some one's been stirrin' up ther brute! Git out o' my way, Jim Snyder! Yer don't want ther hull road, do yer?"

There was a general scattering and a small army of mounted cowboys that had gathered before Coyote Bill's saloon in Dead Mule lined up on the two sides of the road with great alacrity.

A steer was charging down the street, bellowing at the top of its lungs, and behind it came another group of horsemen at full gallop and yelling like a pack of Comanche Indians.

"Rope him, boys! He'll smash my winders!" roared the landlord of the saloon, sticking his head out of the door and jerking it back again lively when he saw that the beast was headed in his direction.

A dozen lariats swung in the air at that second, but the steer avoided them all by turning like a shot and making a wild dash straight for his pursuers.

A yell of horror went up instantly, for with that change in the brute's movements the entire group became aware of fresh danger.

A young girl had darted out of one of the frame houses near by and had started across the road behind the steer, thinking that she had ample time to run between the brute and its pursuers.

As the animal turned and glared at her with its bloodshot eyes she lost her nerve completely, and dropped in a heap in the road, the very worst thing she could have done under the circumstances.

"At him, boys! Trip him up, Bill!"

"Rope him, horns and heels! He'll kill her!" yelled some one.

"It's Gentleman Joe's daughter!"

The steer had lowered its horns while these remarks were being made and was within a foot of the helpless girl when a pistol cracked sharply. At the same minute a lasso was dropped deftly around the creature's head, and the monstrous body swerved to the right and fell in a heap, just clearing the girl's clothing.

"Hello! who ther devil be yer, stranger? Thet thar was well done! Ter hit him square in the vitals!" said the foremost of the group of cowboys.

The man who had fired the shot that killed the steer, and who was now carefully coiling the loose end of his lariat, glanced indifferently at the speaker before he answered.



"I reckon you wouldn't know me if I was to give my name," he said, briefly.

The balance of his party rode up as he spoke, and for a minute the entire group stared solemnly at each other.

"I 'low yer won't refuse us yer name, stranger," went on the first speaker, doggedly. "Yer saved ther gal and we're all obleeged ter yer. Thet thar's showin' yer ther caliber of ther natives of Dead Mule."

He turned to the two men who had just succeeded in restoring the girl to consciousness by means of vigorous rubbing and chafing, and every man in the group shook his head decidedly.

"If that's the spirit of the place I'm glad I came, gentlemen," said the stranger, lifting his hat politely, "and to show that I appreciate your courtesy I'll introduce myself! I am Jesse James, the outlaw, and these are a part of my gang."

If a thunderbolt had dropped among them there would hardly have been more consternation, and then the natives of Dead Mule expressed their opinions frankly.

"By ther etarnal! So yer be really Jess!"

"I reckon yer in ther wrong place, Jess! Thar ain't nothin' ter steal in this hyar section!"

Jesse James accepted their compliments without showing the slightest indignation, but as soon as there was a lull in the conversation he backed his horse, a magnificent thoroughbred Arabian, around so he could face them.

"I didn't expect you'd be over pleased to see me," he said, coolly. "I'm not a welcome visitor wherever I go, but as my errand is a peaceable one I hope you will continue to give me your courtesy, gentlemen."

"And if we don't, Jess?" asked a surly voice, as a stalwart rider separated himself from the group and faced the outlaw squarely.

The outlaw shrugged his shoulders:

"You've all heard of me, I reckon, so you know my ways!"

"I 'low it depends on what 'tis yer arter whether yer git it this time, Jess," said the other, grimly.

"Just at present I'm looking for a gal!" was Jesse's answer.

"What gal be yer lookin' fer, Jess?" asked the big cowboy, promptly.

Jesse James shifted the revolver that he had been holding in his right hand to his left, and dropping

the bridle carelessly upon the thoroughbred's neck, dove into his pocket and extracted a paper.

"That document will tell you all about it, I reckon," he said, stiffly, as he shook out the sheet and then extended it at arm's length so that the cowboy could take it.

The commotion which the shooting of the steer had occasioned had drawn nearly every native or Dead Mule, both men and women, to the spot, so as the cowboy took the paper in his hand the entire community was in the sound of his voice and waiting with eager ears to hear its contents.

They grouped themselves around him in the road before the saloon, and while the reading was going on Jesse James surveyed them critically.

Suddenly his glance fell upon the face of the young girl whom he had just rescued from death, and, as he had not noticed her particularly before, he became interested instantly.

She was a pretty girl, about eighteen years of age, with sunny blue eyes and hair that rippled about her shoulders.

As she caught the outlaw's glance bent upon her she shrank back modestly, and was soon on the edge of the crowd, where she lingered to hear the paper.

The cowboy was not an expert scholar and the writing bothered him a little, but after spelling out the words "To whom it may concern" he became suddenly serious and paused for reflection.

At that minute some one inside of the saloon opened the door a crack and closed it again instantly for some reason or other.

No one noticed the act, and the person inside of the barroom, seeing that he had not been observed, opened the door a little wider and slipped out into the crowd.

"I reckon now, pardners, this hyar is an all-fired momechus dockymment," ejaculated the cowboy, solemnly. "I kin spell it out arter a bit, but I ain't used ter sightin' a target at short range, an'——"

"I'll help you out there!" broke in Jesse James, good-naturedly. "The document is signed by the United States Marshal! It's a warrant for the arrest of a man by the name of Joe Larson—'Gentleman Joe,' I believe you call him."

A feminine shriek followed these words, and once more Gentleman Joe's daughter looked in danger of fainting, but she was quickly surrounded by a knot of feminine sympathizers.



"It's er lie! Ther marshal don't want Joe, nor ther sheriff nuther!" growled one of the men.

"Joe's been er respecterble citizen of Dead Mule fer more'n a year! Thar can't no warrants tech him, Jess," added the cowboy, decidedly.

"So thet's yer errand—to arrest Joe?" said another. "How did ye come by thet paper?"

The cowboy's hand dropped to the butt of the Derringer in his belt as he spoke and his swarthy face grew purple with honest indignation.

"Tell 'em how I come by it, Frank," said Jesse James, turning to the man of his party who so closely resembled him.

Frank James, the brother of the famous outlaw, forced his horse ahead promptly.

"We overhauled a couple of Pinkerton men back here a ways and this paper was in the vest pocket of one of 'em," he said, briefly.

The natives looked at each other for a second and then the cowboy put his own question:

"Whar be they—ther detectives?"

Every man in the crowd put his hand on his gun as he waited for the answer, and even the horses pricked up their ears at the movement.

Something was about to happen in Dead Mule to disturb the peace of the settlement, but before any one could say what it would be there was a shout of a dozen voices.

"Quick! After 'em, boys! One of ther devils has got her! They've stole Liz Larson right under our noses!"

The natives of Dead Mule turned their heads to a man, and as they caught a glimpse of a horse carrying a man and woman dashing around a bend in the road something very like a panic seized them.

"It's one of the James gang! Shoot him!" yelled the cowboy.

"It's Gentleman Joe himself! Let him go, boys! We'll stand between him and them as tries to foller," roared another.

"The fellow was a stranger! He come around ther bend an hour ago and went inter ther saloon," said a feminine voice. "Thet hoss he was ridin' has been standin' back o' ther cistern yonder!"

This last news made Jesse James rise suddenly in his saddle.

"It's that detective, curse him! He's outwitted us!" he cried, hoarsely. "Clear the way, you whelps!"

A wild charge by the four outlaws followed, and as they dashed through the broken ranks of natives no one moved to stop them.

Then the big cowboy came to his senses and rose in his stirrups, aiming two business-like looking weapons at the bunch of riders.

"Thar's treachery hyar, boys, but we ain't takin' no chances in firin' at thet crew! Pepper 'em, boys!" he shouted, and two sharp reports from his weapons followed.

The James gang wheeled in their saddles and fired a shot apiece, then in a cloud of dust and smoke they disappeared like a cyclone.

This was by no means their only errand in this section, and the reckless crew were used to bullets and curses.

Jesse James had been cutting a wide swath through the West, and was on his way to Nevada when he happened to locate Joe Larson at Dead Mule and remembered something that he had almost forgotten.

A few miles from the settlement the outlaw had become aware that two detectives were following him, and had paused long enough on his journey to murder one of them.

The paper that he had given the cowboy was found in the dead man's pocket and helped to give him an excuse to hunt up Larson.

The other detective had escaped, and Jesse had not seen him since he robbed him of a companion until he caught the flying glimpse of him making off with Liz Larson.

The action roiled all of the outlaw's bad blood, and as he dashed around the bend, there was "blood in his eye," for the merciless outlaw was planning another murder.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### JESSE JAMES KEEPS A PROMISE.

"By thunder! the fellow ain't in sight, Jess!"

"He's took ter ther woods! We'll see him on the knoll yonder in a minute, cap'en! Thar's nothin' 'twixt hyar an' thar but er clump o' bushes!"

These comments were made as the outlaw gang dashed on with the kidnapper ahead and the posse behind them.

Jesse James patted his sleek horse, which redoubled its speed at his touch, and then glanced back over his shoulder at his pursuers.



"They're after us, the mayor in the lead!"

"They can't get within range at this pace, Jess! Hello! the leader is down! What the devil did it?"

Jesse James looked again and saw that the leading rider, whom they knew was the mayor, was indeed in the dirt with his horse beside him, but he did not slacken speed because of the accident.

"The horse tripped, probably!" was the outlaw's answer. "Hello! the detective jumped that ditch to the right and made for the woods! See his tracks? On, Fleetwind, my girl!"

He leaped the ditch and plunged into a low growth of bushes, then picking his way at full gallop among stunted trees and rocks gained a slight rise of ground, where he could command a view of the situation.

"The boys are taking it easy behind there! Think they'll wind us, probably, before we strike the woods yonder!" he said, exultingly.

Jesse James urged his horse over the knoll and began the descent on the other side without raising his eyes from the hoofprints that he was following.

A moment later they reached a level tract thickly studded with rocks and intersected with ditches.

"What was the paper, anyway?" asked Frank James, riding close to his brother.

Jesse looked over his shoulder and saw that the posse was not gaining; then, noticing that the tracks he was following led directly over a clump of high bushes, he drove his spurs home and took them at a gallop.

"It was a warrant to arrest Larson, but it wasn't because he used to be a horsethief," was the answer. "The fellow is one of the Wilcox gang and he's wanted for a murder in Tombstone, Arizona."

"What's that to you, Jess?"

"Nothing! The fellow stole the girl from her mother ten years ago. She's his daughter, but she belonged to her mother. I promised the woman to keep an eye out for the gal and I swore I'd fetch her back if I ever found her."

"It looks as if those two sleuthhounds were on the same lay," said Frank, glancing back.

"Hang it, yes! I reckon, tho', they're after her dad. That cuss stole the gal for an excuse to get hold of Joe. He didn't expect to see us this morning."

"No, I reckon he didn't, no more'n we expected

to see him," chuckled Frank. Then, in spite of their rapid pace, he managed to get abreast of his brother.

"Who was the gal's mother, Jess?"

The outlaw put his horse over another clump of bushes before he answered:

"She's Belle Buckham—Big Belle, we used to call her! I thought a good deal of her before she was married! Anyhow, I made her a promise ten years ago that I can just see my way clear to fulfill, but it seems she's applied to the marshal to help her find Eliza."

"And the marshal thought he'd kill two birds with one stone," laughed Frank.

"Three. He expects those two sleuths to kill me, arrest Joe and rescue the girl," was the laughing answer.

"Well, they've made a good beginning! The fellow isn't in sight yet," said Frank, reining his horse over a ditch and then standing erect in his stirrups to look over the landscape.

The crack of a revolver at that instant made him drop like a flash, but as the bullet whizzed past his head it took his sombrero with it.

"Confusion!" roared Jesse James, "the whelp is skulking!"

Another bullet passed the outlaw's face so closely that he felt its breath as he was speaking.

"Ride for it, boys!" roared the outlaw, making another leap over a fringe of bushes.

Crack! crack! went the revolver again, and the last outlaw reeled in his saddle.

As he dropped with his horse on top of him Jesse James did not look behind him.

A mad gallop to the crest of another hill followed, and then the outlaws reined in their panting steeds and turned once more to look behind them.

The Dead Mule posse was still on the level below them, but with the posse stood the thoroughbred stallion, and the fleeing robbers could see upon its back a man and a woman.

"They've found him, curse them!" growled Jesse, as he watched them. "The fellow must have dropped in the bushes."

"They're watching us, Jess! I reckon they'll know us the next time they see us."

"Which'll be sooner than they think," snapped the outlaw, savagely. "That cur holds the first trick, but the game isn't ended."

"They're friendly with the cuss!"



"Of course! He's told 'em some yarn about his being just in time to save the girl from my clutches, and they've swallowed it whole," went on the outlaw king, with his eyes riveted on the posse.

"It's exactly what you'd do if you was in his place, Jess."

"The fellow is as smart as a steel trap!"

"I 'low he ain't smart enough fer you, Jess!"

The words were spoken pleasantly from behind a clump of bushes.

"Haw! haw! Lynch me ef it ain't Milt Sharp!" cried one of the James gang, as a slight, agile figure stepped out into the clearing.

"Put it thar, Jess! I'm glad ter see yer!" went on the stranger. "So you ain't caged yet, Jess, arter all yer deviltry? Ha! ha! No danger of ther government losin' its ten thousand!"

Jesse James greeted the newcomer cordially, and then Sharp, who was the cleverest bandit in Nevada during the seventies, joined the outlaw gang on its ride across the country.

"I'm still a free man and will never be anything else!" said Jesse James, proudly. "The man don't live that can draw a bead on me, Sharp, and live long to crow over his victory!"

"Look ahead thar, cap'en!" broke in one of the men at that minute. "What do ye make o' thet thar! Somethin' clumsier than horses hez been prowlin' through these hyar bushes."

Jesse James leaned low in his saddle and took a sharp look at the tracks; then he put his finger on the trigger of his pistol and cocked it.

The others did the same, and no one spoke for a minute.

"Lie low, Jess!" cried Frank James, as he saw a movement in the bushes.

Crack went his revolver, and a bullet went crashing into the bushes.

A cry of pain followed, and Black Foot, one of Jesse James' men, dropped from his saddle and dragged out the fellow.

"Gentleman Joe, as I live!" ejaculated Jesse James, when he saw him. "Here's luck, boys! We've corraled our bird with only one bullet."

Gentleman Joe looked sullen, but there was no fear in his features.

He wound a handkerchief around his arm just above the bullet wound, and then took a step nearer to Jess, looking up at him defiantly.

"So you've come ter make good yer promise ter Belle, hev yer, Jesse James?" he asked, quietly.

"I have, Joe; but that ain't saying that you have anything to fear," was the answer, as the outlaw proceeded to put up his weapon.

"The gal is all I've got," went on Larson, with a little waver.

"That's neither here nor there. I gave my promise and you know me, Joe Larson. Jesse James never goes back on his word to women!"

"That's a lie and you know it, Jess!" retorted Larson, coolly. "The boys will be hyar in a minute, and then——"

Jesse James turned his head sharply and glanced over his shoulder.

When he looked back he found the muzzle of Larson's gun within a foot of his shirt bosom.

Crack!

The gun dropped to the ground before Gentleman Joe could pull the trigger, and Frank James reloaded his weapon, which was almost empty.

"So you'd have killed me, would you! That settles you, Joe Larson!" growled the outlaw, savagely. "I might have shown you some mercy, but——"

"Bah! I know your mercy, Jess!" laughed Gentleman Joe, derisively; "but if you don't believe I was right, just look behind you!"

Jesse James did not move a muscle, but Wing Shot, one of his men, took a quick look over his shoulder.

"The fellow is right! They're coming, Jess!" he said, sharply.

"Then take care of Joe! I'm off!" ordered the outlaw, touching his horse with his heel.

Fleetwind bounded ahead and put a hundred yards between Jess and his party, then as she settled into a steady pace Sharp and Wing Shot caught up with her.

"Hurry, Jess!" yelled Frank James, who was only within shouting distance. "The curs are coming, and the sleuth is with them!"

Jesse James touched his horse again and five minutes later he was in the very heart of a dense grove.

He had left his men to take care of themselves and their prisoner and defend themselves as best they could against their pursuers.

Waiting behind a thick clump of trees until he was sure the posse was well in the woods he suddenly



wheeled Fleetwind to right angles and dashed off like the wind.

Shots and yells among the trees were the last proofs he received that the natives were trying to flush their quarry, but as he heard it his cruel face lighted with a smile of pleasure.

"Now then, Fleetwind, my girl! back to Dead Mule!" he muttered, gayly. "There's no one there to stop us now except a handful of kids and a few old women!"

Keeping well out of sight of the posse and making a circuit of the hills, he was soon cantering easily down the main street of the diggings.

During that brief ride he had made several changes in his appearance, throwing off a false beard and mustache and exchanging a dirty white hat for a rusty black one.

There was not a woman in sight, and the only man in the street was a Chinaman with a basket of laundry, so the outlaw made his way to Gentleman Joe's dwelling unmolested. There was a lame horse standing before the door, and, exactly as he had expected, the yard was full of women who had come to talk over Liz Larson's escape from the outlaws.

Jesse James reined up before the gate and touched his hat politely.

Then he asked the reason of the dearth of men in Dead Mule, and was told that they were all on the warpath after Jesse James and his gang of outlaws.

"Why, I passed them yonder in the woods," he remarked, in apparent surprise. "They were five to one, so I did not stop, and, besides, the scoundrel had just captured a native of Dead Mule, so I hurried here to give the warning!"

The women crowded around him and Eliza Larson stared at him nervously.

"Oh, stranger! was it my father? A man with one eye and a sandy beard——" she began.

"My poor girl, I'm afraid it was!" answered the outlaw, promptly.

With a cry Liz dashed for the horse standing at the gate, but Jesse James was on the ground in a second.

Catching the young girl in his arms he tossed her onto his own horse, and before any one could wink he was up beside her.

As he clattered down the street he heard imprecations hurled at his head, but as none of the women were armed he did not look behind him. Two miles were ridden before he slackened speed, and, as the girl had tried once to scream, the outlaw's hand covered her face in a way that showed he meant business.

When the settlement had been left behind and there was nothing more to be feared the outlaw removed his hand.

"You wretch! you infamous monster!" cried the girl, undauntedly, as soon as she could speak.

"You shall not be harmed, Miss Larson," he said, solemnly. "I promised your mother ten years ago that if I ever found you I would fetch you back to her. I'm taking you back to your mother!"

Eliza Larson stared at this strange explanation, which, under the circumstances, seemed almost incredible.

"Is that true, Jesse James?" she burst out, finally; then, as it was the outlaw's turn to look surprised, she added:

"I knew it was you, Jesse James, the minute you touched me! How can I trust you? How can I be sure that you mean what you say and that you are not stealing me for some infamous purpose?"

A smile of amusement lit the outlaw's face, and the expression in his cold eyes changed in a minute.

"I'm a bad man, my girl; there are robberies and bloodshed at my door, but no one can say I ever warred on women! You are as safe with me as you would be with your own mother."

"But can you protect me from others? From your cutthroat crew?" asked the girl, breathlessly.

The outlaw drew himself up proudly and shrugged his shoulders.

"They dare not touch you—no, nor look at you—if I so command," he said, haughtily.

The young girl trembled, but she looked up shyly.

"I will trust you, Jesse James," she said, in a low voice, "and I pray that you will keep your word and take me to my mother!"

Five minutes later they were on Fleetwind's back again, and headed toward Nevada.

This time there was no need to stifle the girl to keep her from crying out, but the outlaw's arm encircled her waist tenderly.

There was something in this man's face that had conquered her fear of him.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

MRS. JAMES AND LIZ LARSON.

When Jesse James stopped again it was at the door of a farmhouse which he had reached by a winding path over the roughest kind of country. A handsome woman, somewhere near the thirties, was at the door and an elderly woman stood just behind her.

"It's Jess! I know Fleetwind's step!" called the younger woman; then as she caught sight of Liz Larson she gave a little cry of astonishment.

"Ha! ha! You didn't expect me to bring company, did you, my dear?" called Jesse James, jovially.

"Who is she, Jess?" asked the young woman, who was the outlaw's wife.

Jesse James ignored the question by laughing heartily and helping the young girl down from the saddle.



"Here I am, mother!" he went on, "as sound as a dollar! There's no bad news, I hope!"

"Everything is all right for aught we know, Jess," said the elderly woman, coming forward. "But who is this girl and where did you get her?"

"One question at a time, mother dear!" laughed the outlaw, as he glanced up and saw his wife was still staring with an angry look on her features.

A rough-looking fellow wearing two pistols in his belt came around the corner of the house just then, and the outlaw gave him a hearty greeting. Then as the man led Fleetwind away he turned to his wife and caught her in his arms.

"Don't be jealous, pet! The girl is Joe Larson's daughter! Joe's a member of the Wilcox gang, and he's wanted for murder at Tombstone!"

"Never! It isn't true!" cried Liz, with a rush of color. "My father was a horsethief once—at least, so he says, but I'm sure he never committed a murder!"

"It don't hurt you if he did, my girl!" said Mrs. Samuels, the outlaw's mother, kindly. "You are not to blame for the sins of your relatives."

She looked at her son's wife tenderly as she spoke, and in an instant poor Liz felt that she had found a friend in this stern-faced mother.

"Take the girl inside and give her something to eat! It's been a long ride from Dead Mule to Beauty Villa," said Jesse.

The last was added with a tender look at his pretty wife, and then the outlaw stalked away around the corner of the farmhouse, leaving Liz Larson at the mercy of his wife and mother.

"I say, Jess, did ther wimmin folks tell yer anything?" asked the man who had taken his horse, as he joined him in the stable.

"What about, Dick?"

"Thar was a fellow hyar at daybreak, skulkin' around ther house; did they tell yer?"

"No, they didn't have a chance; the gal was with me! Go on, Dick, and be short. Who was he?"

"That's more'n I know! Thar's his mark, Jess."

Dick Trelby, one of the James gang, who was staying at the farmhouse to protect the ladies, pointed to a piece of board nailed against the wall of the stable.

"Ther feller's feet was muddy, so I was able ter git er good one," he went on, as Jess stared at the footprint outlined on the board. "Ther feller was small; thet thar's erbout er ten-inch sole, I reckon. I sawed it outer ther step by ther well curb yonder!"

"There's one toe missing," remarked the outlaw, quickly. "Why the devil didn't he wear his shoes? He wasn't trying to steal the family plate, was he?"

Dick roared with laughter at this, for there was nothing in the farmhouse but the commonest of tinware.

"I 'lowed ther toe was hurt, Jess, an' ther feller

hed took off his shoe! Thar's ther tother foot! Thar's a shoe on that one, cap'en!"

The outlaw gave a sharp look at the second print and uttered an exclamation.

"Confusion! it's Welch Barrows, the whelp that I kicked out of the gang last week!" began the outlaw, when a form darkened the door.

"Jess!"

Mrs. James stood in the doorway.

"Look out, cap'en! Thar's some one comin'!" warned Dick, in a sharp voice. "I jest caught a glimpse of er shadow across ther door! I'd better go fust an' see who ther mischief is prowlin'!"

He stepped out of the door as he spoke, and then coolly closed it behind him, just as Jesse James caught the sound of a hoofbeat rounding the shed at the end of the building.

"Sh! not a sound, pet!" whispered the outlaw in his wife's ear. "There's some one outside! Dick will——"

"Hello, thar! Cussed ef it ain't Dick Welby! Thet thar is luck, ef I do say it! Put it thar, pardner! You ain't forgot Peg Sanders, hev yer?"

The words reached the outlaw's ears and cut off his sentence, and at that second Dick clinked the rusty padlock on the stable door and locked it securely.

"Great snakes! is thet you, Peg? Give us yer flipper if yer've got one!" he said, coolly.

"Thar's one left an' a leg, too! Haw! haw! Thet thar's more of me than yer ever expected ter see, I reckon!"

"I 'low yer'd orter be in ther grave ef thar warn't," laughed Dick. "Let's see, ther last I heerd of yer, Peg, yer was doin' time at Yuma; thet thar was five years ago, an'——"

"An' sence then I've reformed!" broke in the newcomer, promptly. "Thet stay behind ther bars kinder took ther spirrit outer me an' I 'lowed ther proper place fer me was in er sheriff's office!"

"The devil yer say! Be yer actin' in thet thar kerpassity now, Peg?" asked Dick, quickly.

"I reckon I be! Got ther job last week an' I'm on my fust lay, pardner! Yer couldn't tell me now who lives in thet thar house, could ye?"

Jesse James listened intently at this question.

"I reckon now I can an' will," said Dick, promptly. "They're relatives of mine by ther name of Perkins. Thar's my cousin, Jim Perkins, an' his wife, an' Jim's mother-in-law, Mrs. Wallace."

The outlaw chuckled at the smooth lie, while Dick went on with his explanations.

"They've jest took ther place. Bought it of old Squire Ferguson, ther one thet used ter own ther stage route from Bernardino ter Aurora. I 'low yer remember him, Peg, bein' as how yer used ter ride with him occasionally! Haw! haw! ther was always



an empty cashbox when you was aboard! I reckon now Milt Sharp was yer only rival!"

"An' I'm arter ther cuss now!" retorted the new sheriff, with a chuckle. "I've jest got er pinter thet ther rascal was on ther border! He's been in Californy fer a month gettin' rich, they tell me."

"I 'low Californy's hed more'n its share then," remarked Dick, moving across the yard. "Twarn't a week ago that I heerd Jess James was thar! Who ther devil hez struck it rich in thet thar section thet all ther bandits in creation air arter him."

"Do yer believe thet, Dick?"

"What?"

"Thet Jess is in Californy!"

"Hem! I reckon I got thet bit of intelligence purty straight bein' as how Jess told me himself, Peg! I run ercross him in Bernardino an' he was headed fer ther coast then! I reckon thet thar's ther reason why Sharp came back ter Nevada."

"By ther guns! I never thought er that! It's as plain as ther nose on yer face when yer come ter look at it!"

"Thar couldn't nuthin' be plainer! Milt is makin' fer his old route from Aurora ter Pizen Switch, I reckon! So yer arter ther rascal? Waal, I wish yer luck, sheriff, tho' I ain't got a cussed thing ag'inst Milt thet I know on!"

The voices died away around the house, and Jesse James began to grow uneasy—it was not to his liking to be locked in a stable.

"Suppose the girl should tell who you are," whispered Mrs. James, after they had both listened several minutes.

Jess glanced at Fleetwind, who was munching her oats contentedly, and even put his hand on a saddle near him before he answered.

"We could slip out the back way and ride for it," he said, grimly.

Then he moved toward the door, intending to see if he could force the padlock open.

The crack of firearms at that minute made him rip out a curse.

The next second his massive shoulder was against the wood and the door was sent flying.

"Quick, Jess! this way!" cried Mrs. James, darting toward a rear door.

Jesse James caught her up in his arms and bounded across the yard, reaching the step at the kitchen door just as a horseman turned the corner.

Crack!

A bullet sped past their heads, but Jesse James did not pause a second until he had thrust his wife inside and was half-way over the threshold.

Then, whipping his revolver from his belt, he faced his enemy, uttering a cry of rage as he recognized Welch Barrows.

"So, it's you, is it, you whelp? Take that for your treachery!" yelled the outlaw as he pulled the trig-

ger of his weapon twice in quick succession. Welch Barrows threw up both hands and gave a yell of pain, but, by the time he was reinforced by the sheriff, Jess was in the house and the heavy door was locked behind him.

## CHAPTER L.

### JESSE JAMES FIGHTS A DUEL.

"She did it, Jess! She told 'em, I'm sure of it!" cried Mrs. James, pointing to Liz, who was crouching in a corner of the kitchen.

"The girl didn't mean it, Jess! She let it slip without knowing what would happen. It's lucky Dick was here to kick the fellow out before he could call the sheriff," said Mrs. Samuels, promptly.

Jesse James took one look at the girl's white face and then turned to Dick, who was guarding a window with a Winchester repeater.

"How many of 'em are there, Dick?"

A clatter of hoofs seemed to answer the question, and a dozen horsemen galloped around the corner of the building.

"I reckon'd Peg had his posse with him, but I 'lowed I could fool him, Jess. The gal gave yer away afore I could help it——"

"Never mind the gal! Hold your fire fer a minute! Guard the rear window there, mother, but keep out of range!"

He strode to another window as he spoke and then dodged cleverly as a bullet crashed through the glass and buried itself in the wall opposite.

As quick as lightning the outlaw raised his weapon and a howl of pain from one of the sheriff's men showed that the bullet had found a victim.

"Hark! there's horses comin'!" called Dick, at that minute; then, as a shrill whistle sounded in the rear of the house, he leaned back against the wall and burst into a roar of laughter.

"It's ther rest of ther boys! Haw! haw! now there'll be music! I reckon Frank won't leave Peg a pin to stand on."

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

A volley of shots followed close upon his words, and then those inside the farmhouse held their breath to listen.

"Quick! It's the sheriff, boys!" shouted Frank James, from the rear. "Surround the house and pepper the rascals! Whoop! throw up your hands or you're a dead man, Bob Andrews!"

A shot followed, and then a rush was made by the outlaw gang around the house, for they had returned just in the nick of time to save their captain.

Bang! bang! went their revolvers, and the posse responded, but as Peg, the sheriff, had turned tail



and bolted at the first glimpse of Frank James, they did not put much spirit into their fighting.

The battle was sharp and decisive, and when the last uninjured member of the posse had made for the woods with bullets whistling after him the outlaw gang gave a shout of victory.

"All over, Jess! Open the door and let us in!" cried Frank James, knocking with the butt of his revolver on the heavy door.

Jesse James opened the door and took a look over the battlefield.

"Three dead and two dying," said Frank, handing his horse to Dick.

"Here's another, Frank! Hello! Hang me, ef it ain't Welch Barrows!" called Wing Shot, at that minute.

"I finished him myself before you came," said Jesse James; then he suddenly noticed that his men had their prisoner with them.

At the angle of the house stood a mustang with "Gentleman Joe" upon his back, the man's arms being pinioned at his side and his body fastened to the saddle.

"We didn't know what to do with him, Jess," said Frank, noticing his look. "I reckoned you'd want to deal with the fellow yourself, seeing he drew a bead on you."

"We 'lowed if yer couldn't get ther gal yer'd want ther father," broke in Black Foot, grinning. "Yer cut us so swift, Jess, thet thar warn't no time fer orders."

Jesse James stood like a statue while these explanations were being made.

Of course, his men did not know that he had stolen the girl and brought her home with him, so they did not appreciate the situation.

"What is the matter, Jess?" asked Mrs. James, noticing his expression. "Has anything gone wrong? Is there any more danger?"

The outlaw had done some rapid thinking and now turned to his wife with a look on his face that made her stare a little.

"Take the gal upstairs, dear, and be quick about it! There's something going to happen that she mustn't see!"

The next second Liz Larson herself ran into the room.

Jesse James moved so as to stand between father and daughter, but as Mrs. James turned, Liz glanced over the outlaw's broad shoulder.

A cry of agony followed that echoed to the mountains and Liz darted to the prisoner.

The outlaws, who were bunched before the door now, gave a gasp of wonder; then they all turned to Jess, who was scowling like a thundercloud.

"Take the fellow to the stable!" he roared. "I'll tend to him later! Here, mother! take the gal in-

side and comfort her if you can! I didn't intend she should see her father!"

Liz had looked up into her father's face and extended her hands to him, but as she heard this order she dropped in a heap beside the mustang.

Mrs. Samuels picked her up bodily, and half-carried her into the house, while Jesse James followed his men and their prisoner to Fleetwind's stable.

"Better keep a sentry outside, Jess!" warned Frank James, as they crossed the dooryard.

"Wing Shot can stay! If you see any one skulking, shoot him down like a dog! We've got business on hand that will take some minutes, and I don't propose to be interrupted."

Wing Shot turned his horse at these words, and Jesse James strode on, his black heart seething in a furnace of conflicting emotions.

The fellow had drawn a bead on him, and this was the one thing in the world which the outlaw never forgave or forgot, but for the young girl's sake he was inclined to be merciful.

Advancing to the stable, he confronted the prisoner.

"Now then, Joe Larson," he said, "what have you got to say for yourself? Did you try to kill me this morning or didn't you?"

The prisoner had not made a sound since his arrival upon the scene, but now that he was addressed he raised his head proudly.

"I 'low I tried ter kill yer, Jess, an' I'm right down sorry I didn't do it!"

"Thar, Jess! Now I reckon yer understand ther feller's sentiments," remarked Dick, scornfully. "He hates yer like a snake an' yer life wouldn't be safe a minnit!"

"I 'low now Joe'd be as good as his word," added Black Foot, promptly.

Jesse James looked undecided, but suddenly his brow cleared wonderfully. There was a cruel look in his eyes as he fixed them on his prisoner.

"Cut him loose, boys!" he ordered, with a determined ring in his voice. "Now, give him a gun! Here, my own pop will do!"

He extended two weapons as he spoke, each the counterpart of the other, and, after his men had done his bidding, they stared at him curiously.

"I'm an admirer of pluck wherever I see it," began the outlaw, as Gentleman Joe stepped up calmly and chose a weapon. "So Frank here will measure twenty paces and I'll give you a chance for your life. When he counts three, you can pull the trigger! If there's any tricks my men here will know what to do. Aim at my heart, Joe Larson, as I don't care to suffer!"

He took his place as he spoke at a scratch Frank had made in the sand, and after a careful inspection of his weapon Gentleman Joe faced him.

Black Foot and Dick drew back, each with a



loaded weapon in his hand, while Jesse James removed his hat and raised one hand solemnly.

One!

Two!

Three!

There was a simultaneous crack of pistols, so far as any one could hear, then Jesse James clapped one hand to his side and staggered a little, but Gentleman Joe dropped like a log without so much as a quiver.

At that second a shriek sounded which made even the conqueror turn pale, for he knew by the sound that Liz had guessed what had happened to her father.

A moment of silence followed, in which Frank James examined his brother's wound, and the other two outlaws inspected the dead body of the ex-horse-thief.

"Bury him, boys," said Jesse James, at last, with a slight tremor in his voice.

Wing Shot came around the corner of the house just then, attracted by the shots, and leaving the three men to dispose of the dead and injured, both Joe and the sheriff's men, the two brothers went back into the kitchen.

Mrs. James gave a cry of alarm as she caught sight of her husband, and flew to his side, winding her arms around him.

"You are hurt, Jess!" she began, when a shrill voice interrupted her.

"He has killed my father!"

Liz Larson stood before them, her blue eyes blazing like diamonds, and her pale cheeks crimson with righteous indignation.

She broke down and burst into bitter weeping. Then, as she caught sight of the blood-stained cloth that Frank James was just taking from his brother's side, she grew hysterical, and started laughing.

"Oh, he wounded you! He wounded you! My poor, dear father! He has killed you——"

She started for the door, Jesse James making a weak effort to detain her, but, as his wife drew him back, she cleared the threshold.

Wing Shot was just passing the door and his horse was following him. With an agile bound, she was in the saddle.

She was off like the wind, skimming the bushes at a gallop, and the last they saw of her was a dim speck upon the horizon which the last beams of the setting sun did their best to illumine.

## CHAPTER LI.

BURT WILLIAMS, DETECTIVE.

Mrs. James was overjoyed when she saw the girl had gone, but she understood her husband too well to show her feelings.

She wished no harm to the girl, but she was a

very jealous woman and had no idea of allowing her husband to be tempted, if she could help it.

"After her, Black Foot!" roared Jess, as the girl disappeared over the hills.

The half-breed nodded and hurried after the horse specified, but before he was in the saddle the outlaw's wife joined him.

"Here Black Foot," she whispered, as she handed him a pocket-flask and some money. "Say nothing to Jess, but if you catch the girl take her to the railroad and send her wherever she wants to go. You understand, the girl is not to be brought back here! You have only to tell Jess that you couldn't find her."

The half-breed grinned as he hid the flask and money in his pocket.

He worshiped Mrs. James, and hated her husband, and this was the time to demonstrate his feelings.

Jesse James gave his wife a sharp look when she came back into the kitchen, but it did not occur to him that she would carry her jealousy to such an extent.

Mrs. James smiled happily and gave him a kiss; then she helped her mother-in-law minister to the last member of the sheriff's posse, who had taken an immeasurably long time about dying.

Wing Shot spent the balance of the night putting the dead out of sight, and Jesse James and his brother took turns in patrolling the farmhouse.

At daybreak the entire household breakfasted together, but the outlaw chief was in an ugly temper.

Black Foot had not returned, and there was no tidings of the girl.

Jesse James watched his wife keenly, and at last he began to suspect her.

A family jar would probably have occurred had not a solitary horseman appeared unexpectedly and made every one rush to the door on the lookout for trouble.

"Hullo, stranger!" called the newcomer, as he singled out the bandit king and made a rough salute in his direction.

"Hello, yourself!" growled Jesse James, tightening his grip on the butt of his revolver.

"What the deuce do you want here, and where'd you come from?" he went on, gruffly. "This ain't a roadhouse, my friend, and we ain't looking for company."

He was an old man, and lame at that. The old fellow slid clumsily to the ground and limped toward them, leading a badly winded horse.

"Reckon I don't care a cuss whether you was expectin' me or not, stranger," he said, coolly. "My hoss is done up an' I've got ter stop, an' I 'lowed thar'd be some one hyar ter give us er drink er water!"

"Certainly you can have water, and so can your



horse, mister," spoke up Mrs. James, promptly; then she added, under her breath: "It's Jim Schuyler, of 'Frisco, Jess. Don't you remember the fellow?"

Jesse James opened his eyes wide and then strode forward.

"By thar eternals, if it ain't Jim Schuyler! Put it there, partner! What the deuce has brought you into Nevada?"

He extended his hand as he spoke, but before he responded Jim Schuyler tipped his hat back from his brow and gazed at him curiously.

"Snakes an' crockerdiles! Changed yer tune all of a sudden, didn't yer!" he muttered, in some astonishment.

"How the devil did you know I was Jim Schuyler? Never sot eyes on me afore, an' I'll bet on it!"

"You're wrong there, old man! I knew you ten years ago in 'Frisco," said Jess, promptly. "I was living there at the time with my wife and mother. Reckon you wouldn't remember my name, but that don't matter."

"I 'low I'd like ter hear it, jest the same," said the old fellow, who had not let go of his mustang's bridle.

Jess winked at his wife, but his voice did not show a tremor.

"Anything to be agreeable, Schuyler! I'm Jake Hunter, the Injun trailer. Reckon you remember Jake!"

Another wink followed, for Jess had shown his usual cleverness by telling a good lie.

Jake Hunter had owned a reputation for honesty all over the West, and as Jess knew his history thoroughly he was prepared to back up his statement by any amount of detail.

"I 'low I've heard of you, Jake, but thet thar ain't sayin' I've ever seen you," said the old fellow, slowly, after another look at the outlaw's face.

"I reckon I've changed some," remarked Jess, carelessly.

Then he beckoned to Wing Shot to take the mustang and water it, and was surprised to see his guest grip the bridle a little tighter.

"Reckon I won't bother you none, pardners! I'll water the horse myself if you'll show me ther trough," said Schuyler, gruffly.

Jesse James grew curious at once, and in a second his glance wandered to the saddle upon the mustang's back.

The saddle-bags were well filled, and there was a peculiarity about them. They looked as if they might contain gold bars and nuggets.

"Then I'll show you myself," he said promptly, leading the way around the house.

As the horse was drinking Jesse James moved a step nearer to the horse and put one hand on the saddle-bag.

What he felt made his steely blue eyes light up with pleasure.

The next second, without a word of warning, he snapped the trigger of his pistol behind his guest's ear, and as Schuyler turned with an oath he found himself looking down the barrel.

"Jest drop that bridle and put your hands above your head, Mr. Schuyler," said Jesse James, quietly. "I won't harm you, but I want to satisfy my curiosity!"

He ran one hand into the saddle-bag as he spoke, but the weapon never wavered, and Jim Schuyler did not hesitate to do as he was ordered.

"Gold bars, by thunder! And big ones, too!" chuckled the outlaw. "What route are you working? I ain't seen a haul like that since I crossed the Sierras!"

"The stuff is mine! I came honestly by it," muttered Schuyler, doggedly. "I reckon I've been er fool ter believe you was Jake Hunter, stranger! I 'low I've run plumb inter trouble!"

"Not a bit of it!" laughed Jesse James, with his finger caressing the trigger. "I told you I wouldn't harm a hair of your head, and I won't, but if I was to leave that stuff where it is I'd be going against nature. I'll just relieve you of your load, and then you can eat your breakfast in peace!"

A cruel laugh accompanied the words, and at the same time Jesse James relieved his guest of a brace of revolvers.

Then he took the old fellow by the shoulder and swung him around as he spoke, facing him toward the stable and pushing him as a starter.

Schuyler said nothing more, and when he was twenty feet away he obeyed an order to halt obediently. Jesse James gave a sharp whistle and Wing Shot appeared with Dick behind him, and at a word from their master they removed the saddle.

"Snakes! It's heavy as lead! I 'low tain't often Jess has a windfall like this hyar!" grinned Dick.

"The old Greaser must er held up ther specie box on its way ter ther mine!"

Jesse James snapped the case of a handsome watch, and then gave an order.

"Put the saddle on Fleetwind, boys, and get ready to start! We can make the Blue Cut stage by hurrying a little!"

"Shall we weigh the stuff, Jess?"

Frank James put his head out of the door before he could answer, and called excitedly:

"Hurry, Jess! There's a black spot on the hills that looks like the stagecoach!"

"Then we've got to ride for it! There's your horse, Jim Schuyler! Make yourself at home, and go where you please, but remember, wherever you go, that Jesse James spared you! It ain't often a stranger can tell that story, especially when his looks are against him, as yours are!"



Schuyler said nothing, but lowered his hands promptly and moved toward his horse.

Jesse James strode into the house, the horses were saddled and bridled, and in less than five minutes the outlaw gang was off, the party consisting of four men and two women.

Schuyler watched them ride away, without even looking behind them, and when they were out of hearing he gave a low, shrill whistle. In an instant he was joined by an athletic-looking young fellow, while the mayor of Dead Mule crept out of the bushes some distance from the farmhouse and approached them.

"The girl has gone, Star," said the fellow who was supposed to be Jim Schuyler. "The thing worked like a charm! I saw the whole family. Five minutes later and we'd have missed them!"

"They're making for the stage, which means that they're bound for Aurora! They'll go from there to Pizen Switch, no doubt!" answered the young man, who was none other than Will Star, a third Pinkerton detective.

"Wait till Jess examines the saddle!" chuckled the bogus Schuyler, whose real name was Burt Williams. "There was a gold bar on top worth a couple of hundred, but the rest of the stuff wasn't worth the carrying!"

"I'm sorry we lost the girl," said Star, anxiously. "We had our birds all in a bunch yesterday, and now they're farther away than ever. Suppose while we are here we take a look over the premises."

"Ther place is a reg'lar graveyard," remarked Mayor Jim Burton a few minutes later, when the inspection was completed. "And they're fresh graves, too! Not one on em is more'n a night old! I reckon you've got work ter do hyar, fer it's plain ter be seen Jess has been breakin' his record at murderin'!"

"Our lay is to overhaul the stage and hold Jess up," said one of the detectives, promptly. "We'll stop at the sheriff's office and learn what we can! Too bad we didn't find this ranch a few hours sooner!"

They mounted their horses, which were concealed in the bushes, and as they galloped over the hills Williams removed a false beard and eyebrows.

"That was a bright idea of yours, Burton," he said, gayly; "Jess thought I was Schuyler sure, and so did the whole outfit!"

"I 'lowed he would. Schuyler's a marked man in this section," chuckled the mayor of Dead Mule. "Ther feller allus carries somethin' wuth stealin', but I reckon this was Jess's first hack at him!"

He chuckled as he spoke, but there was an anxious look upon his features.

Mayor Jim Burton, the stalwart young cowboy, was in love with Liz Larson.

He knew nothing of Jesse James' promise to take

her back to her mother, but he did know that Gentleman Joe was one of the men they were after, and they had hoped to bag the father by means of the daughter.

Both had escaped them now, and Jesse James was to blame.

This fact made it more important than ever that they should trap the outlaw.

## CHAPTER LII.

### THE STAGECOACH.

While the detectives were inspecting his newly-made graveyard, Jesse James and his household were galloping over the hills toward the rocky road over which the Blue Cut stage was driven to Aurora.

"It wasn't the stage after all!" said Frank James. "It's a mule team, Jess! We'll have to wait a little."

Jesse James glanced at the moving object wending its way around the hills and nodded.

"Let's have a look at the saddle-bags, Jess! I'm curious to see the swag," laughed Frank, as he dismounted close to the roadway.

Jess slipped from the saddle and ran his hand into the bag.

"By thunder! The stuff isn't worth as much as I thought!" he said, gruffly, as he pulled out a small bar; then he uttered a howl of rage, as he emptied the saddle-bags.

"Fooled, by h——! Curse the fellow!" he roared.

"I reckon you've been took in, Jess. 'Taint gold at all," said Wing Shot, as he inspected it.

"Suppose the fellow wasn't Schuyler after all," ventured Frank.

Jesse James stamped with rage, and flung all the bars except the first one into the bushes.

"Ten to one it was a detective, Jess," went on Frank. "I thought we got rid of that Pinkerton fellow almost too easy. He'd naturally follow when they missed the gal, and as like as not the sheriff put him up to disguising himself like Schuyler!"

"There's the stage, Jess! I'm right this time!" cried Frank, suddenly. "There's two men on the box."

Jesse James took a swift glance across the hills, and then whipped a false mustache and a pair of blue glasses out of his pocket.

The rest of his party disguised themselves in various ways, and then the outlaw king gave a few sharp orders.

"Frank and the women folks will go with me in the stage. You can bring the horses, boys, but be careful of Fleetwind. I'll expect you to join me in the woods this side of Aurora at sunrise to-morrow."



"Anything special fer us ter do on ther way, cap'n?" asked Wing Shot.

"No; only keep a watch out for the gal' and keep shady of the sheriff. There'll be work enough on hand by this time to-morrow."

The stage lumbered up after a little, with the two men upon the box looking like individual arsenals. One, the shotgun messenger for the express company, was holding a "sawed-off" carefully in both hands, while the driver gripped a Derringer, which he promptly flourished at the party.

"Hi, thar! What's wanted?" roared the messenger, pulling a bead on the disguised outlaws.

Jesse James turned his back on the coach and shook hands cordially with his men; then he helped the women to alight from their horses as coolly as if no one had spoken.

"I reckon they're passengers, but this hyar's ruther onusual," remarked the driver, as he looked on. Then he said aloud:

"What's ther matter with yer own beasts?"

"See here. Them horses belong at the farmhouse yonder, where we've been visitin'. You don't reckon they kin tote us clar ter Aurora, do ye?" broke in Frank James, angrily.

"What's the matter with you?" added Jesse. "You have only one passenger, so there's plenty of room."

"I reckon you've got ter take 'em, Pete," said the messenger, in a low tone.

Jesse James threw open the stage door as he spoke, and Pete Perkins finally brought his team to a standstill.

In a second there was a yell, and a man who had been asleep inside the coach grew greatly excited.

"Whoop! Hi thar! Hold on, driver! What ther devil are you about?" he called out, lustily.

"They're all right, Mr. Schuyler!" answered the driver, promptly. "They're goin' ter Aurora, an' thar's plenty of room inside thar. If yer want ter ye kin crawl up on top."

"Get out, if you want to, but be quick about it!" ordered Jesse James, who was standing with his hand upon the door.

The old fellow, whose counterpart they had just left behind them at the farmhouse, scrambled out, hugging two heavy leather bags, and as he crawled to the top of the coach the outlaw managed to feel of them.

A wink at his brother followed, and then the four got inside and Pete Perkins lowered his Derringer and started his horses.

When the coach stopped at the first relay-house the two ladies were asleep, but the James boys got out and loafed around the station. The man with the leather bags never left his seat on the top of the coach, and, so far as any one could see, neither of the outlaws looked at him.

When they left the station a new driver was on the box and another passenger occupied the seat beside Mr. Schuyler.

Jesse James gave them each a keen look, and a scowl disfigured his face.

When it came time for him to get aboard he kicked up something of a row. "What's the matter with that old duffer?" he growled. "It's hotter than hades inside there, and I've had my turn at being cooped up. I reckon it would only be fair for the fellow to change places."

The new driver and passenger exchanged glances at this, but neither moved a muscle, as they waited for the answer.

Jesse James let his glance wander to the faces of the other three men on the top of the coach, and in a second the clever-witted outlaw had come to a conclusion. A dangerous light sparkled in the new driver's eyes, while the new passenger had set his teeth in a determined manner.

"Sleuths, and I'll bet on it," thought the bandit king, as he read their looks; then he turned to Schuyler as coolly as ever.

Schuyler grumbled and growled, but he passed his bags over to the man with the "sawed-off" for safekeeping, and then crawled into the coach beside Frank James and the women.

No sooner was he seated than the crack of a pistol sounded over his head, and in a flash his head was out of the window. He gave one cry of terror, when Frank James leaned toward him like a shadow, and the next second his hands were jerked behind him and a bandana was tied over his mouth to keep him from telling what had happened.

A roar of laughter from the roof of the coach showed that nothing serious had occurred.

Jesse James had fired a shot at something or other just to give Frank this opportunity, and was now joking with his companions over the old fellow's excitement.

"I wouldn't do thet thar ag'in, stranger," warned the shotgun messenger, dryly. "Ther thing ain't right in this hyar section of ther country. It keeps yours truly on ther anxious seat, with his finger on ther trigger. Put up thet pop now or thar'll be er dead man hyar in a minute."

He wheeled around as he spoke, so that he could face the outlaw, and the muzzle of the old "sawed-off" was aimed directly at Jesse's temple.

Crack!

The outlaw's pistol spoke so sharply that no one breathed for a second; then as the messenger rolled off of the box onto the backs of the rear horses there was a plunge of the frightened animals that nearly turned the vehicle over.

At that second another weapon cracked, and a hole was made through the new passenger's coat pocket.



Only the sudden jolt of the stage saved the outlaw's life, but as it was he knew that he was seriously wounded.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

The weapons talked so fast that there was no time for conjecture, and by the time the team was stopped and Frank James was in the road there was no one on the top of the stage but the driver and his brother. These two were engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle, and Frank sprang ahead of the team and stood by the leaders.

Mrs. James and Mrs. Samuels followed Frank to the road, and then both women showed their nerve by looking on without a word at the terrible struggle.

At last the driver went down and Jesse James was victorious.

Frank James left the leaders when he saw Jesse gather the lines in his hands, and went back and pitched Schuyler out into the roadway.

Then he attempted to rifle the pockets of the others, but Jesse's wound was bleeding so profusely that he called to him to hurry. The women scrambled inside and Frank mounted the box, taking the lines from his brother's hands and whipping up the horses. As they rattled out of sight, the two living men who had been left behind sat up in the road and looked at each other.

"Whipped again, by thunder! Star, that fellow is the devil!"

The man who had acted as driver for the stage shook his head disgustedly.

"Curse him! This is the worst trick he has served me! The secret of it is he's always got his finger on a trigger. If I had been sure he was Jesse James I would not have waited."

"That's it! Nobody wants to send the wrong man to eternity. I reckon I'll know him tho' the next time I see him."

"I've thought that before and lived to learn my mistake, old man, but are you badly hurt?"

"I've got a flesh wound or two, but I don't believe they're serious. The old cart saved us by bumping around, but, hello, there's somebody! It's a man and a woman!"

Two riders came in sight as he spoke, and as Star crawled to his feet he gave a cry of pleasure.

"It's Miss Larson! Clap your eyes on that fellow, Burt! Hanged if it ain't one of Jess's own men with her!"

The two detectives stood up and at that second Black Foot spied them, and a forty-two caliber bulldog was aimed in their direction.

"Stop! Don't shoot!" cried Liz Larson, promptly. "They've been hurt! We must stop and help them!"

"You bet they'll stop!" muttered Star, as he cocked his revolver.

Black Foot leaned low in the saddle, and took a good look at the trio; then, as he noticed two more bodies lying by the road, he knew about what had happened.

"That's right, stranger! Put up your gun and be civil!" called Star, without, however, putting away his own weapon. "I'm ther driver of ther stage, an' I've been held up! This hyar was the messenger, an' them two was passengers! I reckon you'll try ter help us!"

Williams turned Schuyler over with his foot while Star was speaking, and, finding that he was more scared than hurt, he unbound his hands and removed the bandana.

"Can't do it nowhow! I've got this hyar gal in tow," began the half-breed, sullenly.

"You must do something for them! Poor man! Is he dead?" cried Miss Larson, pointing to Schuyler.

"No, miss; I'm er livin', I reckon! Cuss ther robbers! They can't kill me!" growled Schuyler, sitting up. "Ther devils hev gone through me a dozen times apiece an' hyar I be without er scratch on me!"

"That's more'n I can say!" remarked Williams, with his eye on Black Foot.

Star crept around to Miss Larson's side and whispered something, and as the half-breed shook his head in reply to a question that Williams had asked him the young girl shut her pale lips with a grim determination.

"Thar's my flask, gents! Thet thar's all I kin do," went on Black Foot, stolidly. "Thar's only these two horses, an' I reckon we need 'em! Come along, miss! We're losin' time. Thar's folks waitin' fer ye at Aurora!"

"You can go without me! I'm going to stay here!" said the girl, in a ringing voice. "Go and tell Jesse James that Liz Larson will let him off from his promise. He murdered my father, and I'll accept no further help from him."

"What?"

Star sprang forward instantly, and stood by her side, for the tears had welled up to her eyes and were trembling on her lashes.

"He shot him last night! I was there and heard it! Oh, you men! Save me!"

She held out her hands appealingly as she spoke, and Williams took one of them and held it.

"Throw up your hands, you scoundrel!" roared Star, leveling his weapon at Black Foot. "I'll give you your choice, you can leave us, unarmed, or I'll bury you in the bushes to keep the messenger company!"

The outlaw's black face was livid, but he put his



hands above his head, and Schuyler, who had braced up wonderfully, relieved him of his pistols.

"Get down!" ordered Star, when this had been accomplished.

The fellow dropped to the ground, and Star and Schuyler promptly mounted the horse, while Miss Larson motioned blushing for Williams to share her saddle.

"Now, go!"

Star said the words and the outlaw obeyed them, heading his steps toward the relay station, which was nearly seven miles behind them.

"It was not all a misfortune that the stage was held up!" whispered Williams, in Miss Larson's ear. "For once Jesse James has done us a favor. He has made it possible for us to rescue the prettiest girl in the West."

## CHAPTER LIII.

### THE OUTLAW'S BEAD.

Schuyler and Star took turns in walking now and then to relieve the horses, and at sundown they had left the stage route and struck into the mountains.

Schuyler was a better walker, rider and talker than he was fighter, and it was his plan to make a short cut and reach Aurora before the stage, if possible.

A sharp turn in the narrow trail that he had chosen brought them into a camp of prospectors, who were just eating their supper, and in a second the entire camp was thrown into a commotion.

"By thunder! It's bandits, boys! We're going to be robbed!" yelled a good-looking chap in tweeds as he caught sight of the party.

"We'll rob you of some grub if you have any to spare, and a bed for this lady!" replied Star, promptly.

The prospectors gathered around at this mention of a lady, and by talking fast the detectives managed to keep them from getting too suspicious.

Then Schuyler happened to find a man from 'Frisco in the crowd that he knew, and after that the hospitality of the camp was offered them.

Miss Larson reigned queen of the camp from that minute, and after she had retired in one of the tents the entire party formed a guard to protect her. Star had to go over his various experiences as a detective on the track of Jesse James many times that night, and the gray of morning approached before any one thought of sleeping.

Williams found a doctor in the camp and some pretty fair liniment, so when the party was ready to start the next day both he and Star had made considerable improvement. The prospector had no horses, so the journey had to end as it had begun, and by the time Aurora was in sight Burt Williams and Liz had become pretty well acquainted.

They were rapidly approaching the settlement when Star suddenly called out:

"Whoop! Look out, Williams!"

The detective turned in his saddle in time to see a figure dart into the bushes behind him, and the next second he had dropped the girl in the path and darted after the fellow.

The crackle of the bushes sounded plainly, but his horse, being a poor jumper, refused to follow.

"It was an Indian," said Star, who had dismounted and ran back. "I looked over my shoulder just in time to see him sneak out, but I can't say for sure that he meant any harm."

After a short wait, the party remounted and went on, the detectives looking back over their shoulders at intervals.

"Sh! What was that?" said Star, softly, as they were making their way through a gorge between the hills.

A halt was made and every one listened.

In a minute they heard it again, a peculiar sound, between a cry and a whistle.

"A signal! We are being watched!" muttered Star under his breath. "Curse the bloody rascals! I believe they are after us!"

Miss Larson clutched the detective's arm at the words, and the young man smiled at her bravely as he answered:

"They'll find us ready when they come! My arm is pretty sore, but I reckon I can pull a trigger. It must be some of the James gang; there's no one else that would be interested in our movements."

"It's the Injun!" cried Schuyler, as a shrill war-whoop sounded, and the next minute they saw two horsemen coming toward them on the brow of the hill.

"Ride for it, Williams! We must save the girl!" cried Star, as both he and Schuyler dropped from their saddle. Liz was transferred to the other horse in a second, and as she and Williams galloped away the other two men hid in the bushes.

The Indians caught sight of the riders, and their yells increased.

This proved to the men in ambush that they had sighted their quarry. "They're after the girl, all right!" muttered Schuyler.

"Which proves they belong to the James gang. First time I knew Jesse had redskins in his crew," was the detective's answer.

The clatter of horses' hoofs was coming nearer now, and as Star peered out between the bushes he made a discovery.

"They've got to come down the gorge! The gulley beyond is too big a jump," he said, hopefully. "That means that we can get a shot at the rascals!"

"Sh! They're slowin' up. I reckon ther Greasers smell us!" warned Schuyler.

The horsemen had pulled up just around the rocks,



and while they were out of range, the ambushed men could hear their conversation.

"Ther was four on 'em, Black Foot! I reckon two on 'em dropped off! Go easy or you'll get a bullet in yer back from behind ther bowlders!"

"We've got ter go on some time, so it may's well be fust as last," was the answer. "Jess'll be mad as a hornet that we wasn't on hand this mornin'. He can't get far without ther horses, but Fleetwind's cast a shoe an' Jess's last words was ter be keerful of ther critter."

"We'll lose ther gal if we don't go on! S'pose we make er dash an' ride like ther devil! Lie low an' yell like er hyena, pard!"

"They're white men, all right!" whispered Star to his companion. "Get your finger on the trigger, Schuyler, and shoot to kill! There'll be two rascals less if they attempt to pass us!"

"Ha! ha! I ain't so sure! Reckon I hold the winning hand!" broke in a voice above their heads, the words being accompanied by the snap of a trigger.

The two men looked up, and Star bit his lips with chagrin.

Jesse James was seated on the rocks twenty feet above their heads, his elbows resting on his knees and a pistol in both hands.

"Reckon I've got the game right in my own hands, strangers," he went on, coolly. "Move so much as a finger and I'll pepper the two of you."

Star did not reply, and Schuyler dropped his weapon in sheer terror.

"Hi, there, Wing Shot!" roared the outlaw. "What the devil are you two waiting for? Get after the girl, and catch her, too! If she ain't in Aurora in an hour I'll put a bullet through both of you!"

There was a clatter of hoofs, and the outlaws, who had disguised themselves as Indians, swept by like a cyclone.

Star groaned as he saw them pass and knew that he could not move a muscle to stop them; but he hoped that Williams and the girl were out of danger.

"Now then, just drop that gun, will you?" said Jesse James again. "You can do it without touching it with your hands, I reckon! Now, stand up and let me have a look at you."

The two men obeyed, Star's pistol falling as he rose, and then the outlaw and the detective glared at each other.

"How the devil did you get here, Jess?" asked Star, with great self-control.

"I thought you were safe in Aurora, with your wife and brother."

"Ha! Ha! It don't do to think too much about me!" laughed the outlaw. "I ain't the kind to be depended on, young man! When my men didn't show up at sunrise I came back to look for them, and

I reckon I'm just in time; how does it strike you, strangers?"

"You're always in time!" growled Schuyler, "but your time'll come, I reckon! What ther deuce do yer want of me when you've made off with ther bags already?"

"And a good haul, too! You're a lucky man, Schuyler, to have so much money! Ten thousand in paper is unusual for Nevada, and it's a luxury, too, for it's easy to carry!"

"Curse you, Jess James! Thet thar was all I had!" muttered Schuyler, beginning to break down.

To his surprise his two men were coming back.

"The girl has escaped!" exclaimed the outlaw.

"Thank God!" muttered Star, under his breath.

Jesse James, without answering, stood erect on the rocks. The outlaw still held the two weapons, and his glance did not leave Star's face for more than a second.

He did not seem to have much fear that Schuyler would attempt to regain his pistol, but he watched the detective like a cat, and with a malicious grin on his features. When the two half-breeds reined up before the rocks Star could hardly help pitying them, for they resembled whipped dogs crouching before their master.

"Well, where is the girl?" roared the outlaw.

Black Foot shook his head and looked at his companion, and as Jesse James began to stamp with anger the fellow called Wing Shot made an attempt to answer.

"They fell in with Mayor Jim Burton and his posse, Jess. Ther cusses would er shot us if we'd gone any farther."

"Where were they?" thundered the outlaw, growing white with rage. Star was forced to smile, as he heard the answer.

"At Nelson's, Jess! They've surrounded the ranch-house! Mayor Jim says that Frank and the women are under lock and key, and they've already wired to the governor and the marshal!"

A curse that sounded like the roar of a lion burst from the outlaw's lips, and he ground his teeth at this information.

"Then we must go to Aurora at once! Curse the whelps who have dared to imprison my wife and mother! Seize those skulkers, men, and drag them to the cave yonder! You know the place, and I'll follow with the horses!"

In a second the two half-breeds were up the rocks and one of them had his hand on Schuyler's collar.

Jesse James waited until he thought his prisoners were safe; then he bounded down the rocks and took hold of the bridle.

A yell of pain from Black Foot made him look around at that second.

The fellow had attempted to seize Star's collar and jerk him down among the rocks, but the clever



detective had swung his right with a straight blow from the shoulder. Black Foot went down in a heap, and Star made a grab for his pistol. As he did so Schuyler saw his chance, and began fighting like a tiger.

Jesse James gave a sharp look at them all and took in the situation.

The next second a bullet from his pistol whistled in Star's direction, and the outlaw sprang to the back of one of the horses and was off like a whirlwind.

Star had flattened himself against the rock in time to escape the bullet; then he returned the fire, but the outlaw rode on without so much as glancing behind him.

Schuyler had put up a stiff fight, but he went down at last under a sledge-hammer blow, and Star, taking deliberate aim, put the last bullet in his weapon into Wing Shot's heart.

The fellow dropped dead without a groan.

"That settles you!" hissed the detective, who was white with rage.

Then he bounded down the rocks and caught the last horse, just as it was about to bolt for the mountains.

He tied it to a tree and took a look at Schuyler, finding him still unconscious, but in no special danger.

Remembering that Jesse had spoken of a cave, he began to look around for it, finding it and returning just as Black Foot rose in a dazed way and stared about him. Star collected all of the weapons in the bunch, and put them in his belt; then he pulled a stout cord from his pocket and bound the half-breed's wrists together.

Then he put Schuyler on the horse, and, ordering Black Foot to precede him, he made his way to the cave, intending to rest a while and get his wits together.

## CHAPTER LIV.

### IN THE CATTLE PEN.

Jesse James rode forward at a tremendous pace, expecting every minute to hear his men behind him. When he came in sight of Nelson's ranch-house he stopped and listened, but there was not a sound of any one following.

Nelson's ranch, or just "Nelson's," as it was always called, was a piece of the roughest country in Nevada.

A fellow by the name of Nelson had bought the land, intending to raise sheep, but after the Wilcox gang and "The Elkos" had cleaned him out once or twice, he abandoned the idea, and went back to Frisco.

Now all that was left on the place was the ranch-

house, some cattle pens and the remains of a corral, and these were almost hidden among rocks and bushes.

Jesse James urged his horse to the top of a steep knoll, where he could overlook the low buildings, and, as he saw smoke issuing from the ranch-house chimney, he burst out with more curses.

"So they've got my wife penned in there, have they! Curses upon them! They shall repent of their rashness!"

He waited a while, and then, as the rest of his gang did not come up, he left the beaten track and plunged into the bushes.

The hours went by while the outlaw sat beside his horse under the shadow of the rocks, and the sun had gone down before he had decided upon his next movement.

When he reached the knoll again it was almost dark, and lights were already twinkling in the small windows of the ranch-house.

Jesse James spoke softly to his horse, and then began the descent of the knoll, moving as deftly among the thick underbrush as any Indian. When he was as near the house as he dared to go he hid the horse in the bushes, and then followed another wait until the landscape was bathed in darkness.

Just at the rear of the ranch-house was a cattle pen, which had the distinction of being a "double-decker." The first floor of the pen was for the accommodation of sheep, while the loft above held fodder for winter. As the outlaw neared this pen in the darkness, he saw a single ray of light, and could hear indistinctly the sound of voices.

"They're using the pen for their horses," he thought, as he listened; then, moving with the utmost care, he approached even nearer.

The loud laughter of two men a little the worse for liquor came to his ears a minute later, and then Mayor Jim Burton, of Dead Mule, called out from one of the windows of the ranch-house:

"Hurry up, there, Sam Skinner! Don't be all night! Them horses don't need all ther oats thar is! Lock ther pen and git in hyar!"

"All right! I'm comin', mayor," was the answer.

"I don't much like the idea of stayin' out hyar all night," growled another voice. "Reckon Tige and I will set up an' play poker till mornin'!"

"Sorry I can't stay, but Jim's word is law," said Sam as he left the pen. "I wouldn't wonder now if thar was blood shed afore mornin'!"

"Over ther gal, you mean! Waal, thet thar sleuth-hound kin hold his own, I reckon! So long, Sam! Sorry ye can't stay!"

A loud laugh followed, and the light disappeared, while a solitary figure could be outlined against the horizon. Jesse James raised his weapon to fire, and then changed his mind, and Sam Skinner was given a little longer lease of existence.



What he had heard had enlightened him considerably on the state of affairs.

He did not even think of Liz Larson now; the detective could have her and welcome for all he cared, but he was cursing inwardly over his own wife's position. He cursed his brother for not protecting the two women better, and, while he was thus engaged, Frank James himself glided through the bushes and joined him.

"Hello, Jess! For once your oaths have been turned to some account," he whispered, while Jesse's hand flew to his pistol.

"Hold on! For Heaven's sake don't shoot me! I'm full of bullet holes already! Snakes! I've had a time of it to get away from those fellows."

"How'd you do it?" asked Jesse, as soon as he made sure it was his brother.

Frank chuckled, and, taking his brother's hand, he made him feel of his garments.

"Petticoats, by thunder!" gasped the outlaw. "Well, I'll allow that's clever!"

"Mother and I traded, and the tenderfeet let me out," went on Frank; "I'm on parole, though! I promised to be back in ten minutes."

Jesse James told Frank what to do, and gave him a pistol; then the bandit started back among the bushes, holding up a long skirt and picking his way like a woman. As the two brothers parted lights began to flicker about the ranch-house, and once more Mayor Jim's voice came through the darkness:

"After him, boys! The fellow has tricked us! He's traded togs with the woman!"

Jesse ground his teeth, but moved back among the bushes as the lanterns came nearer. Then Frank James, who had reached the ranch-house by a round-about way, suddenly gave a roar of laughter:

"Ha! Ha! Here I am, Mayor Jim, more honest than you are! You gave me ten minutes and I've only been out seven!"

The mayor began to curse and retraced his steps, and a minute later the lanterns were in a bunch together.

What happened after his brother voluntarily returned to the house Jesse James did not know, but as he had provided him with a means of defense he felt very hopeful.

What the outlaws meant to do was to wait until a good part of the mayor's men were drunk or sleeping, and then he and Frank together intended to steal the two women and whatever horses they needed to continue their journey.

There had been no time to ask Frank how he happened to fall into Mayor Jim's hands, but the outlaw was not one to be over-anxious about such details. He was only anxious now about his wife, and the only man in the ranch-house that had

aroused his venom was Burt Williams, the detective.

He meant to murder Williams in cold blood, and with this thought in his mind he crept a little nearer.

The two men in the cattle pen had to be taken care of first, so Jesse glided close to the door and listened cautiously. The click of poker chips showed him that they were deep in the game.

A minute later he was up like a cat and moving across the loft above them.

The floor was made of planks fitted loosely together, and as the light below came up through the cracks he had no difficulty in seeing where he was going.

Selecting one of the widest cracks, he knelt so softly that the boards did not even creak, and for fully five minutes he waited in silence.

Then one of the men pushed a pile of chips across the rude table and picked up the half-emptied flask at his side.

"I reckon this hyar waitin' an' list'nin' is too much fer my head, Pete," said the one who was dealing. "Thet hand was a good one, but I 'low I'm a bit off! Hullo! What be you doin', pardner?"

The other feller, a crafty-looking outlaw, who was known as "The Weasel," had slammed the bottle down on the table, and at that second a handful of dust sifted down from the loft above them and floated over the table.

"Reckon thar's a layer of dirt up thar deep enough ter bury us in, Pete," said the Weasel, without looking up. "Take another drink, pard, an' you'll hev better luck, I reckon."

"Mayor Jim hed better look out! Thar's danger afloat, if I ain't mistaken," remarked Pete, as he glanced at his cards. "Thet thar move of Frank's was a trick, you kin bet! He didn't come outer ther ranch-house in them duds fer no good purpose."

A long, shrill whistle from a window in the ranch-house made the two men stagger to their feet and brace themselves against the table, while they stared stupidly at each other.

Crack! went the outlaw's pistol and a bullet struck the drunken man in the left leg just above the knee.

He dropped back with a yell that would have done credit to an Apache.

Pete had risen also and was staring blankly at his friend, when there came another report, and he dropped to the floor, groaning.

Jesse James slipped across the loft and dropped down through a hole in the floor, alighting within ten feet of the startled horses.

Without even glancing at the men, he began calming the beasts, and the very sound of his voice seemed to control the snorting animals.

Throwing saddles on to the backs of the two best horses in the pen he led them out with one hand, while he grasped his pistol with the other. He was



considerably surprised not to be met by any one from the ranch-house.

The quiet that reigned beneath its roof looked decidedly ominous.

Leaving the horses tethered in the bushes, he made his way around the buidling, and as he reached the front door he gave three short whistles.

## CHAPTER LV.

### THE DETECTIVE TAKES A TRICK.

As the last whistle left his lips the door of the ranch-house flew open and Mrs. James tumbled into her husband's arms.

"Quick! Go to Frank!" she cried, hysterically. "Mayor Jim and he are in a dreadful fight at the back of the house!"

She pointed the way, and then started to lead him, but Jesse James took her by the shoulders and whispered a few stern orders.

Mrs. James obeyed instantly, and, darting out of the house, she hurried to find the three horses, for Jesse had told her to get them together.

There was a lighted lamp in the room that Jesse had entered, but not a sign of a human being.

Opening a door, he found himself in a large room, poorly lighted by a lantern and occupied by seven men, who were snoring like steam engines. Giving a quick glance around, he hurried on, reaching another door at the extreme end of the room without dreaming that one of the number had seen him.

The sound of a struggle could be heard as he opened the second door, and the next minute Jesse James had forgotten everything but his brother's danger.

"Come, Miss Larson!" whispered one of the apparently drunken men, and Burt Williams, who had been sitting with his head upon his knees, sprang swiftly to his feet and offered his hand to what looked like a heap of clothing on the floor behind him.

Liz Larson threw off the coats that had been tossed over her and stood beside him in a second; then the two made their way past the sleeping men and out of the building.

Williams half carried her through the bushes.

Then he came to a sudden halt and gave a startled whistle.

Three horses had suddenly loomed up before him in the darkness, and at their heads stood the wife of the outlaw.

As quick as a flash Williams drew an empty pistol and, aiming it at her head, snapped back the hammer.

"A sound and you are a dead woman!" he warned in a low voice. "Drop those bridles, Mrs. James, and give me your weapon. Up with you, little girl!"

As Williams talked, he jerked the pistol from the woman's hands and then helped the girl onto the back of the nearest horse.

A second later he was also in the saddle and leading the way at a swift pace through the dense growth of bushes.

Mrs. James darted back to the house. As she reached the threshold Jesse appeared in the doorway, with blood streaming down his face.

She hastily told what had happened, and with a curse Jesse James bolted toward the one horse that remained to them.

"The rascals won't hurt you, so I'll go for help," he said, sharply. "Frank will die before morning if something isn't done for him. I'll be back soon with a doctor."

He dashed away in the darkness, leaving his wife alone with his mother, who had joined her, and they went back into the building.

The men were still snoring, thanks to the efforts of Frank James, who had succeeded, since meeting his brother in the bushes, in drugging their whisky. Frank himself was still unconscious and bleeding profusely, but Mrs. Samuels gave him some brandy and readjusted the bandages.

Mayor Jim was lying on the floor, with Jesse James' knife in his heart, so the outlook for the two women was particularly hopeful.

Before daybreak the mayor's men were sleeping sounder than ever, but Frank James had come to his senses and was feeling as well as could be expected after a heavy pummeling with the butt of a revolver and two bullet holes in the leg and forearm.

Jesse came back at five o'clock, bringing two disreputable characters with him and a half-breed Indian, who had some skill as a doctor.

They had three horses and two mules, the latter rigged to a sort of litter, and after Frank's wounds had been properly dressed, they left the ranch-house quietly.

Sheer curiosity prompted Jesse to peer into the cattle pen as he left, and he was astonished to find it entirely empty.

"Confusion! I thought I'd crippled 'em!" he muttered under his breath.

"They've lit out with three good horses!"

"Which means that you'll have two more enemies on your track, Jess," said his wife, anxiously. "It is awful, Jess! This has been a night of horror!"

"We'll have pleasanter scenes soon, dear! I never meant that you should go through anything like this," was the answer; then, as they were a safe distance from the ranch-house, Jesse asked a question.

"Where's the stuff we captured on the stage-coach, mother?"

"The sheriff back yonder got it, Jess!" was the



answer. "He and Mayor Jim held up the stage an hour after you left it."

"And they did it right, you bet!" remarked Frank James, faintly. "There wasn't a thing in sight but level country, when I suddenly found myself looking down the barrel of Peg Sander's rifle."

"They met a mile beyond the relay station, it seems," went on Mrs. Samuels, who was riding easily beside her son, and they banded together to capture you, Jess! Those two detectives put them on your trail."

"Poor Frank!" sighed Mrs. James. "He fought like a tartar! If he hadn't drugged the liquor he would surely have been murdered!"

Jesse James scowled as he listened, and his eyes shot fire, but his venom was all directed toward the detective.

"I'll find the whelp yet, ay, and finish him, too!" he muttered between his teeth.

"There's a light ahead, Jess," cried Mrs. James, with a shudder.

Jesse reined in his horse and took a look around him.

The dawn was still gray, as there was a heavy mist upon the mountains, but the outlaw soon made out the twinkling light in the distance.

"It's the headquarters of 'The Elkos,' and they're friends of mine," he said, briefly. "They'll take care of Frank and you two women, but I am not going to rest till I find that detective! I have a score to settle with him, and I'll settle it before sunset this evening!"

A five-minute ride brought them to the door of a log cabin that looked as if it had not been inhabited for centuries.

A steep hill, thickly wooded, rose up at the rear and on either side were rude sheds and corrals for horses.

"I reckon the boys are in the mountains," said one of the new men, knowingly, "but as I'm one of ther gang I 'low I kin do ther honors. They'll be home afore the sun gets too high in ther heavins."

He was right in his conjecture, for before Frank had been made comfortable on a bed of leaves in one corner of the cabin a party of six came galloping in from the mountains.

Signals were exchanged, and then Jesse James went forward.

He was treated by "The Elkos" as a veritable king of bandits.

The great outlaw yielded to their urgings to eat breakfast with them, but by ten o'clock he was in the saddle again on his way to murder the offending detective.

"Good-by, Jess!" said his wife, with tears in her eyes.

The outlaw kissed her tenderly, as well as his

mother, and for the moment he seemed to be the most humane creature living.

But when he started off in company with Bilk Baylie, one of the Elkos and the half-breed doctor, there was a fierceness in his face that made him look like a wild creature.

"Curse the sheriff! I reckon I'll give him a call before I get back!" he muttered, as they rode along. "He's got ten thousand dollars that belong to me. Peg's located at Risin' City and there ain't much to fear there. I'll plan the siege when I'm done with the detective."

"What makes you think you can find the fellow, Jess?" asked Bilk Baylie.

The outlaw glanced over the landscape and struck out in a new direction as he answered:

"I know where I left his partner yesterday," he said, briefly.

"Dead or alive?" asked Bilk, again with a wink at the doctor.

"Dead, I reckon! Black Foot had him. There was a fellow with him by the name of Jim Schuyler!"

An exclamation from the doctor made Jesse turn in his saddle.

"I 'low now thet thar Schuyler was my patient at ther shack ten minutes afore you found me, Jess," he said, in some astonishment. "The fellow was as weak as er rag an' thar was a young chap with him!"

"Dark hair, black eyes, a blue flannel shirt and leather breeches," began Jesse, excitedly.

"Thet thar fits him, Jess! I reckon he was yer man," said the doctor, with a nod of his head.

"Then, where the deuce are my men?" asked Jesse, furiously. "If those two are alive Black Foot and Wing Shot must hev cashed in. It ain't in the order of things that all four should be living."

"I kin gamble on them two bein' ther ones," went on the doctor. "They told me they'd been in a devil of a scrimmage, an' they looked it, you bet! Thar warn't no mistakin' it!"

"Which way were they headed, Sawbones?" asked Jesse, suddenly reining in his horse.

"Aurora."

"Then right about!" ordered the outlaw, sternly. "Whereabouts in Aurora do you reckon they are, Sawbones?"

This time the half-breed shook his head.

He had told all he knew, and could make no conjectures.

Jesse James rode on in silence for some time after that with his brow growing darker with every minute.

The sun touched the zenith and began to decline, and he could see that his threat to settle with the detective would not be accomplished at the time specified.

"Thar's no use, Jess! The thing's got ter hang fire till arter dark," said Bilk, finally. "'Tain't safe



fer either you or me to go into Aurora by daylight. What do you say to a change of togs and a visit to the railroad station? Thar's er lot of boys thar thet'll be glad ter see yer, Jess, an' I reckon it 'ud be a good time to extend your infloouence!"

A short laugh followed, and Jesse James smiled grimly.

"I reckon I do need friends! They're a mighty scarce article in this section," he responded. "We'll stop at Nick's saloon and borrow the togs. Nick is the only man I know anywhere about Aurora."

"Nick's as good a robber as ther devil ever made! Too cussed bad ther fool sticks ter sellin' whisky fer a livin'! Nick could make his everlastin' fortune in a month if he'd try lootin' stages."

"I reckon he thinks thet thar field is bein' over-worked," chuckled the half-breed. "Milt Sharp has been makin' some good hauls of late, an' ther shotgun messengers go against Nick's gullet!"

"Milt's stomach is too weak! He'd orter join the Elkos!" said Bilk, with a grin.

"Or the James gang!" laughed the outlaw king, with a trace of pride in his manner.

"Thar's Milt now!" called the half-breed, as his eye swept the horizon. "He's layin' fer something or some one, yer kin gamble! Thet thar's a queer thing about Milt—he's ther lone highwayman of Nevada!"

"He's welcome to whatever he can get," laughed Jesse, as he caught a glimpse of the solitary figure moving slowly across an open space to the right. "I'm on another lay, pardners! It's vengeance this time!"

"See hyar, Jess! I've got er notion!" broke in the half-breed, suddenly. "Thar's no harm in our cuttin' ercross ther hills an' waitin' at ther White Buck Pass! Milt kin hold up whatever he's layin' fer, but ef ther thing don't work, we kin try a hand at it. He won't go up against no big haul, I reckon! Thar's too many sawed-offs an' pistols handy."

"Thet thar's a fair deal! What do yer say, Jess?" asked Bilt. "It won't hinder us none an' it's better goin'."

Jesse James did not reply, but headed his horse in the direction specified; then the whole three made a detour of a knoll so as to get ahead of the lone road agent.

When they reached the pass there was nothing in sight. They had left Milton Sharp a mile behind them, still waiting in solitude for "some one er something."

Hiding behind some gigantic rocks which bordered the pass the outlaws waited, and at last their ears were greeted by the sound of pistols.

"It's the mail stage from the Silver Mine yonder! What ther devil ailed me not ter think of it afore!" cried the half-breed, suddenly.

"Then thar's bullion aboard! No wonder Milt lay fer 'em!" yelled Bilk, growing excited.

"They've scared him off, I reckon," said Jesse James, who had dropped from his saddle and put his ear to the ground to listen.

A second later the sound of a horse coming at the top of his speed could be heard by them all, and the outlaws promptly hid themselves again behind the boulders.

Milton Sharp, masked and armed to the teeth, dashed past like a whirlwind.

Then a tremendous clatter could be heard down the pass.

Horses were snorting vigorously and men were yelling, and every other minute there was the report of a pistol.

Jesse James drew a mask from his pocket and put it over his face, then he drew two pistols from his belt and cocked them.

"Take care of the horses, Bilk! Get a bead on the driver, Sawbones!" he ordered in a tense voice. "They think they've scared Milt and are hilarious over it. We'll have a dead-easy game, seeing they don't expect us."

Placing himself at a point in the road which commanded the entrance to the narrow pass between the rocks he dropped the bridle on his horse's neck and straightened himself in the saddle.

Bilk and the half-breed flanked him on either side, and the next minute all three caught the first glimpse of the leaders.

## CHAPTER LVI.

### THE DETECTIVES IN THE LEAD.

Crack!

Crack!

Two pistols spoke sharply, and the leaders dropped dead, dragging down the two rear horses with them.

"Halt! Throw up your hands!" roared Jesse James.

"Drop that gun, and be quick about it. Now then, hands up! A move and you go plunk to eternity, gentlemen!"

The coach came to a standstill with the two horses cramped in the harness, and Jesse James rode forward, covering both the driver and the messenger with his pistol.

"Look out, Jess! they're firing from the inside!" yelled the half-breed doctor.

Jesse emptied his pistol, fairly riddling the side of the coach, and then gave a low order to his companions.

"Keep the box covered! Don't let 'em move! Get ahead there, Bilk, and quiet that screeching!"

Shouts were issuing from the coach, and as Bilk



pressed forward to the door a grizzled head was stuck out of the window.

"It's Jesse James! At 'em, boys! Down with the robber!" howled the owner of the head.

Then the head was drawn in and Bilk jerked the door open.

Jesse James had reloaded his weapons by this time, and was close beside him.

"Step out of there, all hands, and be quick about it!" he ordered. "Now, then, put up your hands and don't dare to touch a weapon! You won't be harmed if you obey orders, gentlemen, but the first one that balks will get a bullet in his carcass!"

The passengers, four in number, filed out as he spoke, each with his hands above his head, and an anxious look upon his features. Bilk turned his attention to the bullion bags inside of the stage, while Jesse James lined up his four prisoners and divested them of their weapons.

The shotgun messenger was biting his lips with rage, and as Bilk touched the bag of registered mail he gave a howl of indignation.

"Hold on, Jess! You're goin' too far! Take the silver if you will, but leave the letters! They're government property!"

"Ha! ha! As if I cared for the government!" laughed the outlaw. "Ain't the government setting a price on my head? Smash the padlock, Bilk, and put the letters in your pocket! We'll open them later, when we're rid of our present company!"

Bilk did as he was told and Jesse kept the four passengers back toward him with their arms above their heads until the booty was all transferred to the outlaws' saddles.

"Now, get back and shut down the blinds!" ordered the bandit king, coolly. "I reckon we've got about all there is to get out of you! Smash that sawed-off there, Bilk, and take the driver's pistols!"

Bilk sprang upon the wheel and did as he was told, with the messenger and the driver looking into the muzzle of the half-breed's weapon.

"Now, go on!" said Jesse James, sternly, "and don't dare to look behind! You're lucky to escape with your lives, if you only knew it!"

The driver got down from his seat and cut the horses loose, then remounted the box, swearing like a pirate.

Jesse James laughed grimly, and then the stage moved on.

"A good haul, partners!" he chuckled.

"And the divvy 'll be a square one! Jess, is ther squarest man in the business," was Bilk's quick answer.

Jesse James chuckled again, but there was a hard look in his eyes as he half-closed his lids and glanced from one to the other.

"We'll settle all that at Aurora," he said, jovially;

"and there's the signpost now! We'd better be moving a bit easy, partners!"

The road had widened out and the country was growing more level, and a scrawl on a post near by read "five miles to Aurora."

It was nearly dark, so the horsemen loitered a little, making a detour of the town and arriving at a freight station on the very outskirts.

A half-dozen empty cars were standing upon the tracks, but although the switch lights were all set, there seemed to be no one at the station.

The outlaws rode up fearlessly and dismounted before the baggage-room, and in less than five minutes they were surrounded by a crowd of rough-looking specimens who had been visiting the saloon behind the switch-house.

Few words, but a great variety of signs were exchanged among them, and then the members of different gangs sidled off together, Jess finding himself in the company of his own men, two members of the Sunset gang and two of "The Elkos."

Those who could make nothing of the signs assembled under one of the railroad sheds near the station to talk over their suspicions and consult upon the advisability of notifying the sheriff.

"Bring the horses over yonder, Bilk!" ordered the bandit king, as he noticed some dark looks cast in his direction; then, telling his friends to make tracks for the saloon, he stalked over to the shed and confronted his enemies.

"I reckon you all know who I am," he began, in a blustering voice. "I'm Jesse James! Come over and have a drink, partners! I'm settin' 'em up to-night, and, besides, I've got something in my saddlebags that'll win your confidence! There's silver enough to pay you a year's wages all around, and I'll divide to the last dollar."

The suspicions of the men vanished like magic at these words, and five minutes later a scene of extraordinary interest was enacted in the saloon behind the switch-house. Bilk and the half-breed demurred, but Jesse silenced them by pulling his revolver and threatening to let daylight through them, and an hour later the bullion bags were empty, Jesse James dividing his own share to the very last penny.

By this time several quarts of whisky had disappeared and the men were getting groggy, but the rumble of an approaching freight brought the majority to their senses.

The saloon was emptied in a jiffy of every switchman and freight handler, and Jesse James closed the heavy door and bolted it after them.

Five men besides himself were left seated at the tables, while the two members of the Sunset gang leaned upon the bar.

"Now, boys, there's business on hand," began the outlaw, in a bold voice. "There are two chaps in



the world that I want to put out of it, and I've a notion that both of the cusses are in Aurora."

"Who be they, Jess?" asked a member of the Elkos.

"Pinkerton sleuths," said the outlaw, briefly.

"I reckon we're with yer, pardner, on that deal," remarked one of the Sunset gang, dryly. "We ain't got no love fer Pinkerton detectives."

"Snakes an' alligators! I 'low yer air too late, Jess!" broke in the Elko, suddenly. "Jim Schuyler was here an hour ago and he had a sleuthhound with him! Young feller with a smooth face and leather breeches! They had a half-breed with 'em!"

"Bound or free?" asked Jesse James, with a growl in his voice.

"Tied hand an' foot! They fetched him in on er freighter! I 'lowed he was a road agent the minute I see him!"

Jesse James sprang to his feet and put his hand on his pistol.

"Which way did they go, pardner?" he asked, striding toward the door.

"To ther jail, Jess! Too bad I didn't know yer lay afore! They caged that bird, whoever he was, an' then went over ter Jim Taylor's place, I reckon."

Jesse James did not stop to question the man's authority, but turned the key in the door and flung it open.

"Ten thousand dollars in gold to the man who catches that sleuth alive and hands him over to me!" he thundered; "but move easy, men, or you'll get the sheriff after you!"

There was a general exodus from the saloon, and Bilk brought the horses to the door, but Jesse James had thought of something and gone back into the building.

When he emerged again he had on a pair of overalls and a jumper, such as the freight handlers wore, and in this disguise he sprang into the saddle.

The night was dark, and Aurora did not boast of much in the way of street lamps, so for a little distance the three friends kept together.

Arriving at the main street they listened to Jesse's last orders, then parted company and went in different directions.

The outlaw's plan was to search Aurora until he came upon Star and then take him into the mountains and torture him.

Black Foot's fate did not arouse an atom of sym-

pathy in his breast; on the contrary he chuckled over being rid of the fellow without having to waste a bullet on him.

Just one thing worried him, and that was the fear that Star had already reported at the sheriff's office, and he was in no condition to escape from a posse.

What he did not know was that Star was determined to win the government's ten thousand dollars, and had consequently begged Schuyler not to tell their experiences to any one in Aurora.

The search through Aurora was made quietly but patiently, and at exactly midnight Jesse James and seven men met in a patch of woods behind Jim Taylor's hotel and held a brief consultation.

"He's in there, all right, Jess—the sleuth and Schuyler, too," whispered one of the Elkos. "I saw 'em through the window as I was ridin' by! Jim's shut up early for some reason or other—it can't be now thet they're expectin' company."

A low laugh followed, for he was easily understood.

"Jim'll give 'em what protection he kin, most likely. He's er white-livered cuss thet has no love fer the road agent. Reckon he has as good er right ter hate 'em as his guest, Jim Schuyler."

Another laugh followed, and then there was a brief pause as the men fixed their gaze upon the outlines of a frame building directly in front of them.

"Hello!" whispered Bilk, as a window shutter on the house was opened and then closed again quickly.

"What's the matter, pard? See anything?" asked the Elko.

"Reckon I did! There's a woman in thar, Jess, and Taylor is er batch—he ain't got wife nor children."

"The devil you say! Reckon it's a barmaid," said Jesse, anxiously.

"Snakes! Think Jim'd allow thet thar sort er thing! Why, ther Vigilance Committee would be arter him ef ther was a gal a servin' liquor! No, siree! thet thar woman was a bute an' er stranger in Aurora!"

"You've got all-fired good eyes, Bilk," growled Jesse James, moving his horse forward. "I saw something white, but I couldn't swear 'twas a woman!"

"Sh! Thar! look quick, Jess!" whispered Bilk, as the shutter swung open again.



In a second a woman's head appeared in the window and an impatient hand jerked back the shutter.

"Thet thar rusty shutter has done us a good turn, I reckon," said Bilk, quietly. "Thar's er coin in my pocket thet says thet thar is Joe Larson's darter—the gal thet bolted from Nelson's ranch-house."

"Are you dead sure, Bilk?" asked the outlaw, in a husky voice.

"I've known ther gal ever since she was knee high ter a grasshopper," was the answer. "Joe an' me was pardners till after thet thar deal at Tombstone an' he went ter Dead Mule an' got respectable."

"I reckon you're right," said the outlaw, grimly, "and if she's in there you can bet the other sleuth is with her! Ha! ha! I've got another chance to square my account! There's the two whelps and the gal, to say nothing of Schuyler."

"And Taylor's cashbox," broke in the half-breed doctor. "'Tain't much, but it'll pay fer breakfast in the mornin'!"

"Come on, men! Make a break for the barroom and call Taylor up! What the deuce does he mean by closin' the bar at midnight?" roared Jesse James.

He touched his horse as he spoke and galloped across the lot behind the house with his cutthroat crew behind him.

If the two detectives were inside he determined that nothing should save them.

## CHAPTER LVII.

### BAFFLED.

"Whoop! Hi, thar, Jim Taylor! Whar be yer skulkin', anyhow, yer rascal? Come down an' open ther door afore we bust it in!"

This speech was delivered while the men pounded with their weapons on the door of the old tavern, and for fully a minute there was no sign of an answer. Then a shutter on the second floor flew open and Jim Taylor's head could be seen in the window.

Instantly a brace of pistols was leveled at his head and Bilk demanded the cause of the closed door in front of them.

"Can't help it, gentlemen! Thar's been er death in the family, an' I 'low its ther proper caper ter close ther ranch," came in Taylor's coolest voice. "Thar's liquor enough over at Pete Dinger's place. I 'low yer won't none of yer choke afore yer kin git thar!"

"Thet's a good un, Jim, but it's no go!" said Bilk, promptly. "We know your licker an' we don't know

Pete's, besides we're lookin' fer beds an' Pete don't run no such accommerdations. Git er move on, an' open ther door! This hyar gang ain't ther kind ter take no fer an answer!"

"I reckon yer'll hev ter take it this time," growled Taylor, decidedly. "This hyar ranch belongs ter me, an' I'll open or shet it accordin' ter my notion."

"You will, will you? Take that for your impudence!" roared Jesse James, and a bullet struck the shutter within an inch of Taylor's temple.

In a second every window on that side of the house flew open, and crack! crack! crack! went some good-sized weapons.

Bilk gave a yell of pain at the very first report, but he gripped the saddle and saved himself from falling.

"Now! Fire!"

The voice came from one of the windows and belonged to Star, and before the outlaws had returned the first fire they were treated to a second.

"Curse them! Pepper 'em, boys!" howled Jesse James, rising in his stirrups.

Crash!

Bang!

A volley from over a dozen weapons was poured into the various windows, and then the outlaw gang drew back around the angle of the house to escape what might follow.

Two minutes passed and there was no response to their onslaught; then they could hear the squeaking of the rusty shutters.

"Once more, before they close the windows!" yelled Jesse James, and, making a dash for the front all together, they poured another shower of bullets into the narrow windows. As the report died away the outlaws bunched themselves and listened.

"Reckon we've silenced ther whelps," muttered Bilk, who was gritting his teeth to keep from groaning. "They've put a bullet through my shoulder, but I 'low I'll square ther shot afore long! Ef they don't come out now I'll set fire ter ther old shanty."

As he spoke a head suddenly protruded from one of the windows, and the half-breed raised his weapon, but Jesse James stopped him.

"Hold on! It's a woman! Liz Larson, by ther eternal!"

"Yes, I'm Liz Larson, Jesse James!" called out the young girl, shrilly. "I'm the daughter of the man you murdered! You're a human monster, but you'll



never get me in your clutches again! Go ahead and fire the house if you want to."

"Better let me stop her tongue, Jess!" muttered the half-breed, as the girl finished. "We can't take no talk like thet thar, even from petticoats, cap'en!"

"Shut up! Let the gal talk, it won't hurt any one!" ordered the outlaw, sharply.

He chuckled as he spoke, and then, as the shutters remained open, he arrived at a conclusion.

"I reckon she's the only one left to do any talking, boys. The others must have stood too close to the windows!"

"Then we'd better go in and have a look at our work," said one of the others. "Batter the door down, boys, and let's count the enemy!"

"Touch that door at your peril, Jesse James!" said a ringing voice, at that minute, and Burt Williams put his head out of one of the windows.

"Ha! ha! ha! a pretty dare! Get back there!" yelled Jesse, and a bullet shattered the glass in the open sash less than a second after the detective withdrew his face from the window.

"At it, boys! Smash it in! The sleuths are living!" went on the bandit king, furiously. "We'll finish the whelps and 'tend to Jim after!"

The men sprang from their saddles and put their shoulders against the door, which yielded under the terrific force that was put upon it.

"The curs are upstairs! After 'em and ten thousand dollars to the man who puts the most bullets into 'em!" yelled Jesse, who had taken the precaution not to leave his saddle.

The outlaw gang made a rush for the stairs, but as they reached the first step they were greeted by a volley.

The two detectives and Taylor had stationed themselves at the top of the stairs, and were flanked by both Liz Larson and Schuyler.

As the bullets crashed into the brains of two of their pursuers, the rest fell back with cries of baffled fury.

Jesse James made a movement to dismount from his horse, but the sudden clatter of horse's hoofs in the main street alarmed him.

He listened with bent head for the space of a second; then a shout of victory from the detectives inside, and a whoop from the approaching horsemen decided him.

Without a moment's hesitation he put spurs to his

horse, and, leaving his followers to their fate, dashed back toward the mountains.

A minute later the sheriff and his posse arrived upon the scene.

They found Jim Taylor and his guests guarding the entrances to the tavern, while the barroom floor was literally covered with the dead and dying.

Only four out of the seven were in a condition to be arrested and jailed.

The other three were removed to the morgue and buried the next morning.

The detectives had won a victory, but it was not the sort of one that they desired, for Jesse James, the outlaw, had once more escaped them.

Burt Williams and Liz Larson were married before they left Aurora, and it was the detective's pleasure to finally reunite the girl and her mother.

Star kept up the search for Jesse James for some time, even going back to Nelson's to look for the fellow.

Here he found one of the men who had been drugged that night, and this sheepish individual told him how the others had felt when they woke the next morning.

The body of Mayor Jim had been taken to Dead Mule, and the two fellows who had been shot by Jesse James in the cattle pen were laid up for repairs in their own shacks at the settlement.

Later on it was rumored that Jesse James had joined his family and removed them to some lonely spot in Nevada to wait until Frank was in shape to resume business as a "road agent."

Wherever he was he had hidden himself securely, and the detective's search ended in disappointment.

Schuyler went back to 'Frisco a discouraged man.

His adventure with Jesse James had taken all the grit out of him.

When the famous outlaw was next heard of he was at the same old work, holding up solitary travelers, railroad trains and stagecoaches and adding to his bank account with nearly every transaction.

There was no section of the country too desolate or too dangerous for him to visit if it possessed sufficient of the "swag" to make it worth visiting.

His will was indomitable, his luck varied, but in the long run successful, and for years after the adventures chronicled here the name of Jesse James brought heart-sinking and terror.



# YOUR OPINIONS OF FAMOUS MEN.

**Grand Prize Contest**



**22 VALUABLE PRIZES  
GIVEN AWAY.**

Here is a chance for every reader of **JESSE JAMES WEEKLY**.

Boys, you have all heard of the plucky little Kansan who has been making himself famous on the other side of the world.

What do you think of him?

What characteristics do you see in his face?

What has he done, anyway?

What do you think is the best thing he ever did?

The boys who can best answer such questions applying to any famous American, known for his brave deeds, will win handsome prizes.

Here is the plan of one of the most novel contests ever placed before the American boys.

Look up what interesting facts you can find about any famous American. Then write them out in your own words, stating your own opinion of him, his appearance, and the particular achievement which pleases you the most. The first prize will be awarded to the person sending in the most interesting and best written article; the next best will win the second prize, and so on. It makes no difference how short they are, but no contribution must be longer than 500 words.

## LOOK AT THE PRIZES.

### TWO FIRST PRIZES

The two who send us the most interesting and best written articles will each receive a first-class Camera, complete with achromatic lens, and loaded with six exposures each. Absolutely ready for use. For square pictures  $3\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$  inches; capacity six exposures without reloading; size of camera  $4\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2} \times 5$  inches; weight 15 ounces; well made, covered with grain leather and handsomely finished.

### FIVE SECOND PRIZES

The five who send us the next best articles will each receive a "Sterling" Magic Lantern Outfit, together with 72 admission tickets and a large show bill. Each lantern is 10 inches high, 4 inches in diameter, with a  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inch plano-complex condensing lens and a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch double complex objective lens. Uses kerosene oil only.

### FIVE THIRD PRIZES

The five who send us the next best articles will each receive a Handsome Pearl Handled Knife. These knives have each four blades of the best English steel, hardened and tempered. The handle is pearl, the lining brass, and the bolsters German silver.

For ten next best descriptions, ten sets of the latest and most entertaining Puzzles and Novelties on the market, numbering three puzzles each, including Uncle Isaac's Pawnshop Puzzle; the Magic Marble Puzzle and the Demon Outfit.

This Contest closes December 1. All contributions must be in by that date.

## SEND IN YOUR ARTICLES AT ONCE, BOYS.

We are going to publish all of the best ones during the progress of the Contest.

We will have to reserve to ourselves the right of judging which article has the most merit, but our readers know that they may depend upon Street & Smith, and on their absolute fairness and justice in conducting Contests. This one will be no exception to the rule.

## REMEMBER!

Whether your contribution wins a prize or not, it stands a good chance of being published, together with the name of the writer.

To become a contestant for the prize you must cut out the **Character Contest Coupon**, printed in this issue. Fill it out properly, and send it to **JESSE JAMES WEEKLY**, care of Street & Smith, 238 William Street, New York City, together with your article. No contribution will be considered that does not have this coupon accompanying it.

### COUPON.

**"JESSE JAMES WEEKLY" CHARACTER CONTEST No. 1.**

Date.....1901

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# CHARACTER PRIZE CONTEST.

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During the progress of the Prize Character Contest this department will be devoted to the publication of the best articles sent in by the contestants.

Here are some of the best ones received so far. They are coming in with a rush, boys, so hurry up and send in your articles as soon as possible.

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## The Man Who Fought Lincoln in Debate.

(By Charles E. Brown, Bloomington, Ill.)

I have always heard a good deal about Lincoln and his debate with Stephen A. Douglas, but I never knew much about Douglas. So when I saw your prize contest for articles on famous men, I thought I would look up what facts I could find about him and send them to you and become a contestant.

Stephen Arnold Douglas was short, thickset and muscular. He used to be called "The Little Giant." I was surprised to find that for many years before Lincoln appeared on the scene he held a very conspicuous place in the history of the Republic.

His family was of Scotch descent. His grandfather was a soldier in the old war for American Independence, and his father was a skillful physician.

Stephen A. Douglas was born in Brandon, Vermont, in 1813. He never went to college, but at the age of fifteen apprenticed himself to a cabinet maker.

He soon got tired of that, though, and then he studied law, and commenced practicing in Jacksonville, Ill., in 1843.

He must have been pretty smart, because when he was only twenty-two years old, he was elected attorney-general of the State.

He was elected a judge of the Supreme Court when he was twenty-eight years old.

Two years later, in 1842, he was elected to Congress, where he remained until 1848.

Then he was chosen a United States Senator and that was the office he held when he died.

In both houses of Congress, Mr. Douglas was an acknowledged Democratic leader, being always ready to get up on his feet and talk. And he made things fly, too, when he spoke.

In 1854 he introduced the famous Kansas-Nebraska bill, and despite strong opposition this bill was carried through.

He was in favor of leaving the question of slavery in these territories to the people.

That bill made him famous all over the country, and in 1856 he became a rival candidate to James Buchanan for the Democratic nomination of President of the United States. He lost.

But in 1860 he was again a prominent candidate. There were two candidates before the convention. John C. Breckenridge was the choice of the Southern Democrats and Stephen A. Douglass of the Northern Democrats.

There was a split in the convention—many of the Southern members seceding and forming a separate convention.

The Southern Democrats opposed Mr. Douglas because he would not promise to help them keep up slavery.

Douglas and Breckenridge were both defeated by Abraham Lincoln, though Douglas received a vote within 500,000 of the vote Lincoln received.

Soon after that election the Southern politicians led the people of several slave-labor States into open insurrection against the national government.

Then Douglas came out for the Union, and he upheld the Union up to his death in 1861.

I feel sorry for Douglas, because although he was in the wrong in his debate with Lincoln, just the same he was solid for the Union, and yet people think he was on the Southerners' side because he opposed Lincoln. He was not. He was on our side.

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## The Founder of the New York Tribune.

(By George Foley, Northampton, N. H.)

I would like to enter an article on Horace Greeley, the founder of the *New York Tribune*, in your character contest.

He was born and he spent his boyhood up our way so all the folks around here know about him, but perhaps some of your readers do not.

I like best to read of his experiences after he reached New York. He walked there most all the way from



Erie, Pa. He walked a part of the way by the towpath along the canal, but once in a while he got a ride in a scow.

He had only ten dollars when he landed in New York, and he had a terrible time getting work. Finally he got a place in a printer's office. He worked there a year but most of his money was sent to his parents. Then business grew dull, and Greeley lost his place.

Then a printer friend, Mr. Story, suggested that they start in business, their combined capital being one hundred and fifty dollars.

They did so and their first work was the printing of a penny "Morning Post," which suspended in three weeks. Greeley and Story each lost sixty dollars in this enterprise.

But you couldn't faze him. He was now twenty-three years old, and as he was deeply interested in politics, he determined to start a weekly paper. The "New Yorker" was begun, but much of the business was done on trust, times were hard, and after seven years the enterprise had to be abandoned.

This was pretty tough, I think. The poor man had had nothing but struggles all his life.

President Harrison died after having been a month in office, and seven days after his death, Mr. Greeley started, April 10, 1841, a new paper, the *New York Tribune*, with the dying words of Harrison as its motto: "I desire you to understand the true principles of the government. I wish them carried out. I ask nothing more." The paper had scarcely any money for its foundation—only a thousand dollars loaned by a friend—but it had a true man at its head, strong in his hatred of slavery and the oppression of the laboring man, and fearless in the advocacy of what he believed to be right.

Success did not come at first. Of the five thousand copies published and to be sold at a cent each, Mr. Greeley says, "We found some difficulty in giving them away." The expenses for the first week were five hundred and twenty-five dollars; receipts, ninety-two. But the boy who could walk nearly six hundred miles to see his parents, and be laughed at for poor clothes, while he saved his money for their use, was not to be overcome at thirty years of age, by the failure of one or of a dozen papers. Some of the *New York* journals fought the new sheet; but it lived and grew till, on the seventh week, it had eleven thousand subscribers.

In 1860 he was at the Chicago Convention and helped to nominate Abraham Lincoln in preference to William H. Seward. Mr. Greeley had now become one of the leading men of the nation. His paper molded the opinions of hundreds of thousands. He had fought against slavery with all the strength of his able pen; but he advocated buying the slaves for four hundred million

dollars rather than going to war—a cheaper method than our subsequent conflict, with enormous loss of life and money.

One of the most remarkable things he ever did was going bail for Jefferson Davis, the leader of the Confederacy. He was opposed to his hanging.

Jefferson Davis had been in prison for two years, but he was now released.

The North was wild with anger against Greeley.

Later he ran for President against General Grant, because he and quite a portion of the Republican party didn't like the way General Grant was treating the Southerners. They thought Grant was too hard on them.

But he had no show against Grant and was badly beaten. Some people say the disappointment killed him.

When his death became known, the whole nation mourned for him.

### Pontiac, the Ottawa Chief.

(By Henry Rogers, Detroit, Mich.)

I saw an article in the *JESSE JAMES WEEKLY*, about Pontiac, the Indian chief, but as I had an article already written, I thought I would send it. It was written especially about the "Siege of Detroit."

According to the articles I have read the blow that gave the first intimation of the conspiracy for exterminating the whites, fell on Detroit, under the immediate direction of Pontiac. Under pretence of a friendly council, he and sixty of his warriors entered the fort on the morning of May 6, 1763.

The Indians had sawed off their guns so as to conceal them beneath their blankets. When Pontiac should extend to Major Gladwyn, the commandant, the wampum belt, the massacre was to be made of those in the room; the gates were then to be opened, and the warriors without were to pour in and complete the work of butchery. Every Englishman was to be slaughtered.

This treacherous scheme was frustrated by the power of woman's love. Gladwyn had won the affections of an Ottawa maiden. The evening previous she revealed to him the whole diabolical plot.

Gladwyn was, therefore, prepared for the savages. His troops were all under arms, much to Pontiac's surprise. The council followed; but when the moment came for the delivery of the wampum, every officer present drew his sword, and the soldiers presented arms.

The savages stood like fierce beasts at bay, and, after a scorching rebuke from Gladwyn, were permitted to depart. Why some were not retained as hostages it is difficult to determine.

The scheme now being divulged, immediate preparations for the "Siege of Detroit" followed.



The work of butchery commenced on the 9th. Numbers of helpless or unwarned Englishmen outside the fort were massacred, and the fort invested by a large body of warriors.

During May a relief came up from Niagara, but it was surprised on Point au Pelee Island, when nearing its destination, and most of the men were captured, to be burned at the stake, with cruelty almost without a parallel, under Pontiac's own eye, and by his orders. The blackened corpses were sent adrift on the river to float by the fort and the little vessel lying under its guns, and thus inform the garrison of the fate in store for all captives.

This awful tragedy was, at short intervals, succeeded by the arrival of parties dispatched to capture the other posts already named.

In every instance they bore as trophies, upraised on poles, the scalps of victims—painful evidence to the besieged of the extent of the Indian uprising, and of the sad fate of their brothers.

Every art was resorted to which savage ingenuity could suggest to fire the fort and palisades—to destroy the schooner, whose "big guns" were a source of terror to the assailants—to pick off the garrison by rifle shots, etc. But the brave Gladwyn was ceaselessly alert, and his men, well knowing what an end must be theirs if they yielded, fought and watched with desperate resolve.

Lieutenant Cuyler, who had led the detachment surprised at Point au Pelee Island, succeeded in escaping, with two of his boats, and reached Niagara to report his loss. There he found a vessel, dispatched by Gladwyn from Detroit at the beginning of hostilities to report the garrison straits. In this vessel Cuyler and his men re-embarked.

Well provisioned for the posts relief, and well armed, the little schooner reached Detroit River June 19.

Being caught calm-bound above Turkey Island, she was approached, on the dark night of the 23d, by a perfect swarm of savages. But Cuyler was prepared. Waiting calmly until the Indians were well within range, he opened on them with grape and musketry, and they fled howling before the death storm. The next day the fort was reached in safety.

But the siege went on. The two vessels, with their guns, swept the river banks opposite, and greatly annoyed Pontiac.

Their destruction was resolved upon, and on the night of July 10 a fire raft came down stream.

It was a sublime sight, and one full of peril; but the vessels escaped, the raft passing down in mid-stream.

Another huge raft came down on the night of the 12th, but this passed too close in shore. A third raft was started on the succeeding night, but Gladwyn had

anchored booms in the river above, and the rafts were powerless for harm.

Thus continued the siege until the savages became disheartened. Some Shawnees and Delawares who had joined Pontiac's forces in June, were the first to retire from the investment.

Reinforcements for Gladwyn were dispatched, under Captain Dalzell, in July. These men, landing at Sandusky Bay, destroyed a Wyandot town, and then, running the gantlet of the savages along the river, reached Detroit in safety on the 29th. But the impetuous Dalzell was himself soon murdered (July 31) in a night attack on Pontiac's camp.

Pontiac having learned of the sortie was prepared for it, and a dreadful fight ensued at what has since been known as Bloody Run.

A second dispatch vessel, with a crew of eleven, and six Mohawk Indians to be used as scouts and spies, reached the river September 3. The Mohawks were sent ashore on a scout on the 4th. True to their treacherous nature, the red scoundrels went at once to Pontiac's villages, and gave the alarm. That night the vessel was boarded by over 300 savages, and a dreadful hand-to-hand combat ensued. The captain being killed, Jacobs, the mate, a man of great resolution, ordered the vessel to be blown up. A Wyandot understood the order, and immediately every Indian leaped overboard in dismay. Jacobs, thus left alone, proceeded up river and reached the fort.

This provision of the garrison, and the reports of heavy reinforcements from below so discouraged the savages that all but Pontiac's Ottawas sued for peace. Thus abandoned by his allies, Pontiac temporarily withdrew from Detroit late in October, and the famous siege was for the time raised.

### New Way to Catch Woodchucks.

The following mode of capturing the woodchuck, or ground hog, is new and effective: Procure a small dog; get a water turtle small enough to enter the hole, bore a hole in his shell just above his tail, procure a piece of wire about six inches long, fasten to one end of this wire cotton wick saturated with kerosene oil, fasten the other end of the wire to the turtle, place him in the hole, and then light the cotton wick, and in a moment the turtle will enter the hole in double-quick time until he reaches the end of that hole, and then retraces his steps and appears in front again, ready for another march for another camp. You can imagine the surprise of the woodchuck on the entrance of such a blazing enemy. He leaves his fort only to meet death at his own door by the dog sentinel. This effective plan is the invention of a Virginia negro. The writer has seen it put in practice often, and never knew it to fail. It matters not what is in the hole—woodchuck, skunk, or any other animal—he must leave on the approach of this formidable torch bearer.



# Hunting and Trapping Department.

This department is brimful of information and ideas of interest to the young trapper and hunter. Write us if you have any questions to ask concerning these subjects, and they will be answered in a special column. Address all communications to the "Hunting and Trapping Department."

## The Downfall Trap.

This is the famous harpoon trap, so commonly used in Africa for the capture of the hippopotamus. There is no reason why it may not be successfully employed in our own country for taking large game, or modified on a reduced scale for smaller animals.

The hippopotamus makes his daily rounds in regular beaten pathways; and the trapper, knowing this peculiarity, turns it to advantage. This is a common habit with many animals, and these "run-ways" are easily detected by the matted leaves and grass and the broken twigs. Over such a beaten track the harpoon trap is suspended.

The harpoon used by the native African trappers somewhat resembles a double-barbed arrowhead, and has a reflexed prong on the shaft just behind the barbs—a sort of combination between a spear and a fish-hook. It is a terrible weapon; and, when once launched into the flesh of its victim, its withdrawal is impossible, on account of the reflexed barb. Any sharp steel shaft will answer the purpose of the harpoon; it should be eight or ten inches in length, and filed to a keen point. We will now construct the trap. The first requisite is a straight section of the branch of some tree. This should be about four inches in diameter, and four feet in length. Into one end of this beam the harpoon should be firmly embedded, allowing the point to project about six inches. This beam should then be weighted with two large stones, attached firmly by a rope, about eighteen inches above the harpoon. At about six inches from the other end of the log a notch should be cut, having its flat side uppermost. The implement is now ready.

Select some favorably situated tree, whose branches extend over the pathway chosen for the trap. By the aid of a rope secured to the log, and thrown over the limb, the weighted beam may be drawn up into the tree. While thus held by a person below, the trapper should climb the tree to complete operations.

For this purpose a smaller branch about three feet in

length should be cut. One end should be flattened off on both sides, so as to fit in the notch in the beam, and the part which rests on the limb should also be flattened to prevent turning. A piece of stout Indian twine should next be fastened to the unwhittled end of the stick, which may then be adjusted in the notch of the harpoon beam.

The string may then be thrown down, and grasped by the companion below, who holds it firmly, after which the original rope may be removed. It will be noticed that the weight of the harpoon and accompaniment rests on the short arm of the lever which passes over the limb of the tree, and the tension on the string from the long arm is thus very slight. This precaution is necessary for the perfect working of the trap.

To complete the contrivance, a small peg with a rounded notch should be cut, and driven into the ground directly plumb beneath the long end of the lever. It should be inserted into the earth only sufficiently to hold the string without pulling out, and the side of the notch should face the path; its height should be about a foot.

Into the notch the string should be passed, being afterward drawn across the path and secured on the opposite side at the same height. The trap is now set; and woe to the unlucky quadruped that dares make too free with that string!

A very slight pressure from either side is equally liable to slip the string from the notch, or loosen the peg from the ground, and the result is the same in either case—down comes the weighted harpoon, carrying death and destruction to its victim.

For large animals this mode of setting will be found to work perfectly. When constructed on a smaller scale it may be slightly modified. It will be noticed that, when the string is approached from one side it is merely slipped out of the notch—a slight pressure being sufficient to dislodge it—while the pressure from the opposite direction must be strong enough to lift the peg out of the ground bodily. This is easily done when the peg is lightly inserted; but, to insure success, even with



light pressure from either side, an additional precaution may be used, if desired.

Instead of fastening the end of the string securely to some object on the further side of the path, it is well to provide the end of the cord with ring or loop, which should be passed over a nail or short peg, driven in some tree or branch, or fastened unto an upright stake, firmly embedded into the ground. The nail should point in the opposite direction from the notch in the peg, and its angle should incline slightly toward the path.

It will thus be seen that an approach from one side forces the string from the notch in the peg, while an opposite pressure slides the ring from the nail.

This mode of setting is especially desirable for small animals, on account of its being more sensitive.

Such a trap may be successfully used for the puma, bear and the lynx. When constructed for smaller animals, the harpoon may be dispensed with, a large stone being equally effective in its death-dealing qualities.

### The "Twitch-up" Snare.

This snare, we imagine, is one which all our boy readers will immediately recognize; for it would certainly seem that any country boy who does not know the "Twitch-up" must be far behind the times, and live in a locality where there are no rabbits, quail or even boys, besides himself, to suggest it. This snare is a universal favorite among nearly all country boys. Its name, "The Twitch-up," conveys perfectly its method of working.

It has many varieties, of which we will select the best. They may be divided into two classes—those with upright nooses, and those in which the noose is spread on the ground, the latter of which are commonly called "ground snares." We will give our attention first to the "upright" style. These are rather entitled to preference on account of the harmless death which they inflict, invariably catching by the neck. Whereas the ground nooses as frequently lift their prey into the air by their feet, and thus prolong their suffering. Twitch-ups are the most successful, and sure of any snares, and that, too, without being complicated. The writer, in his younger days, was quite an expert in trapping, and he can truthfully say that he found more enjoyment and had better success with these than with any other kinds of traps he employed.

They are generally set in thickets or woods where either rabbits or partridges are known to abound. Having arrived at his chosen trapping ground, the young trapper should first select some slender, elastic sapling; that of the hickory is the best, and is generally

to be found in open woods—if not, some other kind will answer very well. It should be about five or six feet in length (trimmed of its branches), and in diameter need be no larger than an ax handle or a broomstick. When this is decided, some spot about five feet distant from the sapling should then be selected. The hatchet and knife will now come into excellent use, in cutting the sticks for a little enclosure.

This enclosure should be about eight or ten inches in diameter, and of about the same height. The sticks should be driven into the ground in a circle, leaving an open space of about six inches on one side. A stout switch as large as a man's little finger and nearly two feet long, should then be cut and nicely sharpened at both ends. This should then be driven into the ground in the form of an arch, at the opening of the enclosure.

After the arch is firmly fixed in its place, a short piece of stick should be cut, of a length corresponding to the height of the arch. To the middle of this stick the bait should be attached, being either tied to it or stuck on a plug driven into the stick, the latter being sharpened on one end. Next proceed to cut another stick, of about six inches in length; let this be flattened on one end. The wire noose should then be fastened to the opposite end. The noose in this case should be large enough to fill the opening of the arch. We will now go back to the sapling again. It should be bent down slightly, and a piece of the strong twine should be tied to its tip. Taking hold of the string, proceed to bend down the end of the sapling in the direction of the enclosure, until it draws with a force strong enough to lift a rabbit if he were tied to the end of it. Thus holding it down with the string against the front of the enclosure, cut off the twine at the place where it crosses the top of the arch, as this will be the required length. It is now necessary to tie the end of this string to the same piece of wood and at the same place to which the noose was tied. When this is done the trap may be set. The piece of wood holding the noose should be passed beneath the top of the arch, as far as it will go, with its long end pointing inside the enclosure. By now supporting the inside end with the bait stick, and carefully adjusting the noose so as to completely fill the arch, the trap will be set.

In order to reach the bait the rabbit or bird must necessarily pass its head through the noose, after which, if the bait be scarcely touched, the animal's doom is sealed, and he is lifted into the air, generally suffering almost instant death. It is well known that in the case of a rabbit the neck is broken by a very slight blow, a strong snap of the finger being often sufficient. It is therefore safe to conclude that when thus suddenly caught and lifted by the noose, death must occur almost instantaneously from the same cause.



It is not really necessary to success that the force of the sapling should be strong enough to lift the rabbit from the ground, as a mere strong tightening of the noose would be sufficient to cause strangulation and death. But we recommend the former method as being less painful and more rapid in its effects.

If the young trapper should experience any difficulty in finding saplings of the right size, in the locality where he desires to set his traps, the difficulty may be easily mended by cutting the poles elsewhere, and carrying them to his trapping ground, this answering the purpose equally well. They should be sharpened nicely on the large end, and firmly stuck into the ground. The "Twitch-up" may be used for the capture of all varieties of game, and when set with the noose in the opening of a hollow tree a stray coon will occasionally be entrapped.

### The Barrel Trap.

This most ingenious device possesses great advantages in its capabilities of securing an almost unlimited number of the vermin in quick succession. It also takes care of itself, requires no rebaiting or setting after once put in working order, and is sure death to its prisoners.

A water-tight barrel is the first thing required. Into this pour water to the depth of a foot. Next dampen a piece of very thick paper, and stretch it over the top of the barrel, tying it securely below the upper hoops. When the paper dries it will become thoroughly flat and tightened. Its surface should then be strewn with bits of cheese, etc., and the barrel so placed that the rats may jump upon it from some neighboring surface. As soon as the bait is gone a fresh supply should be spread on the paper and the same operation repeated for several days, until the rats get accustomed to visit the place for their regular rations, fearlessly and without suspicion. This is "half the battle," and the capture of the greedy victims of misplaced confidence is now an easy matter. The bait should again be spread as before, and a few pieces of the cheese should be attached to the paper with gum. It is a good plan to smear parts of the paper with gum arabic, sprinkling the bait upon it. When dry, cut across in the middle of the paper.

Leave the barrel to take care of itself and the rats. The first one comes along, spies the tempting morsels, and with his accustomed confidence jumps upon the paper. He suddenly finds himself in the water at the bottom of the barrel, and the paper above has closed and is ready to practice its deception on the next comer. There is not long to wait. A second victim soon tumbles in to keep company with the first. A third and a fourth soon follow, and a dozen or more are sometimes

thus entrapped in a very short space of time. It is a most excellent and simple trap, and if properly managed, will most effectually curtail the number of rats in any pestered neighborhood.

By some it is considered an improvement to place in the bottom of the barrel a large stone, which shall project above the water sufficiently to offer a foothold for one rat. The first victim, of course, takes possession of this retreat, and on the precipitate arrival of the second a contest ensues for its occupancy. The hubbub which follows is said to attract all the rats in the neighborhood to the spot, and many are thus captured.

We can hardly recommend the addition of the stone as being an improvement. The rat is a most notoriously shrewd and cunning animal, and the despairing cries of his comrades must rather tend to excite his caution and suspicion. By the first method the drowning is soon accomplished, and the rat utters no sound whereby to attract and warn his fellows. This contrivance has been thoroughly tested and has proved its efficacy in many households by completely ridding the premises of the vermin.

### Requisites of a Good Steel Trap.

1. The jaws should not be too thin nor sharp cornered. In the cheaper class of steel traps the jaws approach to the thinness of sheet iron, and the result is that the thin edges often sever the leg of their would-be captive in a single stroke. At other times the leg is so deeply cut as to easily enable the animal to gnaw or twist it off. This is the common mode of escape with many animals.
2. The pan should not be too large. This is a very common fault with many steel traps, and often defeats its very object. Where the pan is small, the foot of the animal in pressing it will be directly in the center of the snap of the jaw, and he is thus firmly secured far up on the leg. On the other hand, a large pan nearly filling the space between the jaws as the trap is set, may be sprung by a touch on its extreme edge, and the animal's toe is thus likely to get slightly pinched, if indeed the paw is not thrown off altogether by the forcible snap of the jaw.
3. The springs should be strong, scientifically tempered and proportioned. The strength of a perfectly tempered spring will always remain the same, whether in winter or summer, never losing its elasticity. The best of tempering, however, is useless in a spring badly formed or clumsily tapered.
4. The jaws should be so curved as to give the bow of the spring a proper sweep to work upon. The jaws should lie flat when open, and should always work easily on their hinges.
5. Every trap should be furnished with a strong chain with ring and swivel attached, and in every case the swivel should turn easily.



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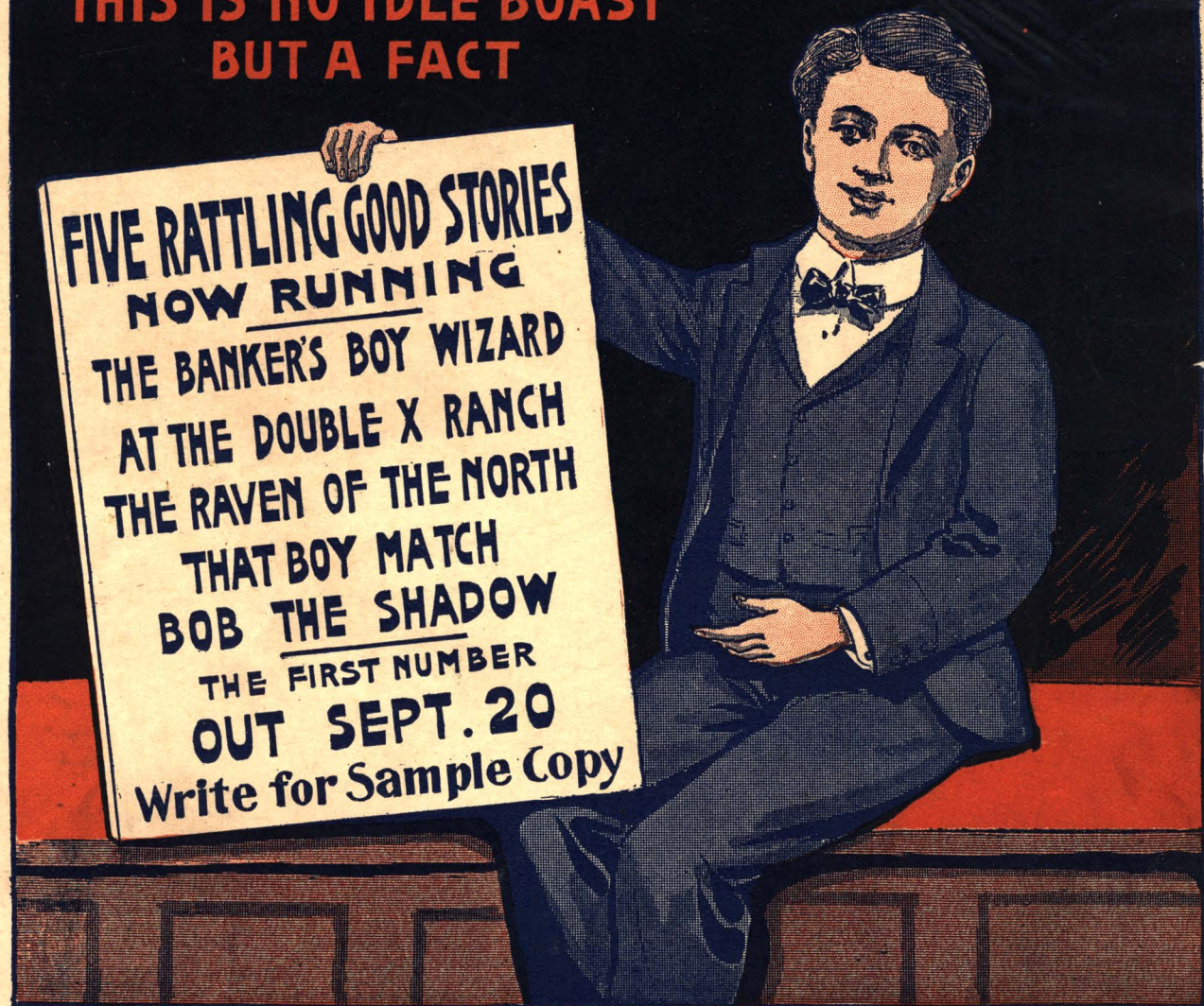
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